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A top-down photograph of three slices of pie, likely pumpkin or pecan, served on white plates with decorative blue borders. Each plate has a silver fork resting on it. The plates are arranged on a dark, rustic wooden table. The slice on the top right is on a plate with a blue floral pattern. The slice on the bottom left is on a plate with a blue rim. The slice on the bottom right is on a plate with a blue rim. The pie has a golden-brown crust and a dark, textured filling. There are some crumbs scattered on the table around the plates.

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A Los Angeles chef returns to the Midwest of her childhood for an epic Thanksgiving feast that marries the sophistication of restaurant kitchens with beloved homestyle classics. Crème fraîche mashed potatoes, cabbage braised in duck fat, a bronzed holiday bird with earthy celery-root stuffing, and plenty more have her family coming back for seconds. *By Mary Sue Milliken*

66 **Miss American Pie**

Salted caramel apple, pumpkin maple brûlée, ginger chocolate chess, brown butter walnut, coconut lime custard—America's iconic dessert has taken many forms through the years, every one of them crave-worthy. As one cook learns how to master a flaky dough, she uncovers a sweet world of homemade pies perfect for the holiday table. *By Lesley Porcelli*

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For one frequent visitor, the flavor-packed cuisine of Alentejo, Portugal, is a continual source of comfort and inspiration. Garlicky bread soup with softly poached eggs, rustic plates of braised pork and clams, and spareribs brought to life with a slick of sweet red pepper paste: These and other foods give this sleepy region its culinary allure. *By Jean Anderson*

Cover Roast Chickens (see "Bird of Paradise," page 42) PHOTOGRAPH BY INGALLS PHOTOGRAPHY

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	2 tbsp. Sicilian Sea Salt	2 tsp. Ground Mustard	1 each onion and orange, quartered
	1 tbsp. Coarse Grind Black Pepper	1 whole turkey (12 to 14 lb.), fresh or frozen, thawed	2 Bay Leaves
	1 tbsp. Smoked Paprika		1/2 cup Kitchen Basics® Chicken Stock

MIX first 6 ingredients. Place turkey, breast-side up, on roasting rack in shallow roasting pan. Sprinkle 1 tbsp. of the spice mixture inside turkey. Stuff with celery, onion, orange and bay leaves. Brush turkey lightly with oil. Spread remaining spice mixture over entire surface and under skin of turkey. Add stock to pan; cover loosely with heavy-duty foil.

Directions
ROAST in preheated 325°F oven 1 hour. Remove foil. Roast 2 to 2 1/2 hours longer or until internal temperature reaches 165°F (175°F in thigh), basting occasionally with pan juices. Remove turkey from oven. Let stand 20 minutes. Transfer to serving platter. Reserve pan juices to make gravy or to serve with turkey. Makes 15 servings.

For great-tasting recipes, menus and more, visit mccormickgourmet.com

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The **C** denotes a Classic *SAVEUR* recipe. For more information, visit saveur.com/classic



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FIRST



The Power of Pie

A savory chef gets Thanksgiving lessons on the sweeter things in life

THANKSGIVING at home in Danville, Virginia, means a gathering of upward of 40 family members. A few years ago, the party was so large we held it at the Elks Lodge on Main Street. A dozen tiny kids ran amok, their teenage siblings acting way too cool for holidays, while my aunts hurried around, bumping into each other with catering-sized portions of sliced turkey, Virginia ham, dressing, gravy, my cousin Tabitha's scrumptious sweet potato casserole, and mountains of other sides. My mother, a vegetarian, brought Tofurky, mushroom gravy, and her famous potato salad. Against my better judgment, I stuffed myself so full that the dessert end of the table never saw my visit.

This was as always; I don't have much of a sweet tooth. In my work as a chef, I shied away from baking, focusing instead on savory cooking. I viewed bakers as supernaturals, with special hands that could spin sugar and turn out a drool-worthy pie.

Associate food editor Kellie Evans in the *SAVEUR* test kitchen amid a bounty of Thanksgiving pies.

Once I landed in the *SAVEUR* test kitchen, though, I was thrust into an atmosphere where the scent of anything sweet right out of the oven sent editors into a frenzy. So while testing recipes for the story on pies in this issue (see "Miss American Pie," page 66), I decided to get over myself and called in some big guns—Melissa and Emily Elsen from Four & Twenty Blackbirds pie shop in Brooklyn. Mere mortals, but ones in pursuit of perfect pie, these two sisters taught me how to work the dough just right, leaving behind little bits of unmixed butter for a wondrously flaky crust; how to prevent soggy-ness by sprinkling flour and sugar on the crust before adding the filling; and how to "sweat" fruit in a little lemon juice for a luscious, not soupy, filling.

Just like mastering poached eggs or learning to grill the juiciest steak, it's empowering to have these new skills under my belt. This year at Thanksgiving, I promise to make more of a fuss over the dessert end of the table, even placing a few of my own pies there for the rest of the family to enjoy.
—KELLIE EVANS, Associate Food Editor



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In the Raw

Crudités are a celebration of the bounty of the harvest

FOR ME, THE whole thing began with radishes. When I was seven, thanks to the spiral-bound 1965 edition of the *Betty Crocker Boys and Girls Cookbook*—my mother's childhood copy—I was introduced to the extraordinary notion that radishes could become roses. I learned to carve thin petals into them and drop them into ice water, where they would blossom. I'd savor them with a little sprinkle of salt.

There's nothing new about eating raw vegetables, but in the States it wasn't until the first half of the 20th century that an austere serving of celery sticks was recast as an opulent appetizer. The distinction is partly semantic: Fashionable French restaurants in America offered first-course relish plates of raw vegetables, referring to them in their native tongue (the word *crudité* itself is French for "rawness," though the presentation may include cooked or cured ingredients), and the term caught on. To me, the definition is also an aesthetic one: Crudités live or die by their composition, by their balance of colors, and the allure of the arrangement. Whether it's a single sliced carrot or a polychromatic cornucopia, it's meant to be admired.

Crudités' popularity has waxed and waned over the years. They never really went away at a certain

A crudité platter of radishes, summer squash, cucumber, cherry tomatoes, caperberries, and more.

type of gilded brasserie, but only very recently has the dish been showing up at the hipper sorts of restaurants. I'm proud not to have been a fair-weather fan—and I'm in good company. James Beard called crudité "the most appetizing dish imaginable," and artist Wayne Thiebaud immortalized them in his 1963 painting *Plate of Hors d'Oeuvres*. What accounts for their timeless appeal? For me they're the best demonstration of earthly abundance you can lay on a table. Broccoli is just a starting point; I might add wedges of raw fennel, pickled caperberries, or blanched green beans, and always several dips. I never make the same composition twice—but I always use radishes, and sometimes I even carve them into roses. —Helen Rosner

Creamy Watercress Dip

Purée 4 oz. watercress, 1 cup cottage cheese, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup mayonnaise, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup each roughly chopped chives and parsley, 2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice, plus salt and pepper in a food processor until smooth. Makes 2 cups.

Roasted Carrot and White Bean Dip

Heat oven to 400°. Toss 2 cups roughly chopped carrots, 2 peeled cloves of garlic, and 2 sprigs rosemary with 2 tbsp. canola oil, plus salt and pepper on a baking sheet; roast until tender, about 20 minutes. Transfer to a food processor; discard rosemary. Add one 15-oz. can of rinsed and drained cannellini beans, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. ground coriander, plus salt and pepper; purée until smooth. Makes 2 cups.

Lemon Parmesan Dip

Stir $\frac{1}{2}$ cups mayonnaise, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup grated Parmesan cheese, 2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice, 1 tsp. each Dijon mustard and Worcestershire sauce, 1 clove garlic mashed into a paste, the zest of 1 lemon, salt, and pepper in a bowl. Makes 2 cups.

Hot Pockets

In Colombia, one woman holds the key to the ultimate arepa

ANA TULIA Gómez Peña, 69, stands on the patio of her home in Cartagena, Colombia, shaping dough between her palms to make one of the city's most beloved foods: *arepas de huevo*, fried cakes of corn masa stuffed with soft-cooked eggs. She flattens each disk, then slips it into a vat of hot oil, where it sizzles and puffs. Using a wire skimmer, she deftly pulls it from the fryer, slices it along the side, and drops in a raw egg. She fries the patty again, and then hands it to me. I take a bite. The *arepa* has a light crunch at the edges that gives way to a fluffy interior. The egg within is perfect—the whites set, the yolk soft and golden. I devour it with a dollop of hot sauce.

Arepas are an essential Colombian snack—one that dates to precolonial times. They are found across the country in all sorts of styles, from the *antioqueña*, a simple griddled patty of ground white corn and water, to the *santandereana*, a hearty yellow corn cake filled with pork rinds and cheese. But Cartagena, the colonial city on Colombia's coast, is known specifically for its egg-stuffed version, of which Gómez Peña is the undisputed master. For 29 years in a row, her *arepas* took first place in the Festival del Frito de Cartagena, a popular fried food festival. (In recent years she's sat out to give others a chance to win.)

Born to a family of modest means in San Antonio, three hours

from Cartagena, Gómez Peña learned to make *arepas de huevo* by watching her grandmother and her *padrinos*, or landlords, make them. Today, having bought a house and sent three children to university with her earnings, Gómez Peña sells them from her patio for 1,500 pesos (about 80 cents) a piece. Her *arepas* have made her a local legend. "When I'm not here," she says, "everyone comes and asks, 'Where's Ana?'" —Freda Moon

☛ Arepas de Huevo

(Egg-Stuffed Corn Cakes)

SERVES 8

Twice-fried *arepas* (pictured left) stuffed with soft-cooked eggs are a classic street food in Cartagena, Colombia.

- 2 cups precooked white corn flour, preferably Harina P.A.N. (see page 104)
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. kosher salt
- 1 tbsp. canola oil, plus more for frying
- 8 eggs
- Hot sauce, for serving (optional)

1 Mix corn flour and salt in a bowl. Stir in $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups warm water and 1 tbsp. oil until dough forms; knead until smooth, 2-3 minutes. Divide dough into eight 4-oz. balls. Heat 2" oil in a 6-qt. saucepan until a deep-fry thermometer reads 325°. Flatten balls into 5" disks, about $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick. Working in batches, fry, flipping once, until puffed, 3-4 minutes. Transfer to paper towels to drain.

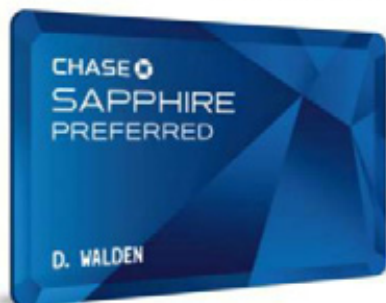
2 Increase oil to 375°. Working with one arepa at a time, slice a 3" incision horizontally without cutting all the way through to make a pocket. Crack 1 egg into pocket; fry until egg is set, 2-3 minutes. Drain on paper towels; serve with hot sauce, if you like.





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We're thrilled to announce the SAVEUR Culinary Travel Awards, honoring the cities, restaurants, markets, and food-filled tours that have wowed us with their vibrancy, authenticity, and uncompromising quality. Winners were chosen by an expert panel of world travelers, as well as SAVEUR readers. Globe-hop from Le Comptoir in Paris (nominated for Best Hotel Restaurant) all the way to Tokyo (nominated for Best Culinary City): See the winners at SAVEUR.COM/TRAVELAWARDS.



◀ **Lima, Peru**
Best Culinary City
Nominee

▶ **Tokyo, Japan**
Best Culinary City
Nominee



◀ **Le Comptoir, Paris**
Best Hotel Restaurant
Nominee

▶ **Restaurant at
Meadowood, Napa,
California** Best Hotel
Restaurant Nominee



▶ **Epitouran**
Best Culinary Tour
Operator
Nominee

▼ **Lyon, France**
Best Culinary City
Nominee



▲ **Alain Ducasse au
Plaza Athenee, Paris**
Best Hotel Restaurant
Nominee

▼ **Bangkok, Thailand**
Best Culinary City
Nominee



▶ **New York Bar at the Park
Hyatt Tokyo**
Best Hotel Bar Nominee

◀ **Mandarin Oriental Hong
Kong**
Best Hotel Room Service
Nominee



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY HÔTEL RILAS SAINT-GERMAIN; COURTESY PROMPERA; COURTESY JING; COURTESY HOTEL PLAZA ATHENE; COURTESY TOURISM AUTHORITY OF THAILAND; COURTESY NEW YORK BAR AT THE PARK HYATT TOKYO; COURTESY MANDARIN ORIENTAL; COURTESY THE RESTAURANT AT MEADOWOOD; COURTESY MPA AGENCY; COURTESY EPITOURAN



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Sense and Sensibility

When I worked in restaurants after college, I quickly learned to stop asking how long to cook things, and instead to look, smell, and taste to tell when food was done. But most cookbooks, in an effort to convey every detail, don't acknowledge that our senses are as important as our kitchen timers. I was delighted, then, to find that attentiveness is at the heart of *Coi: Stories and Recipes* (Phaidon, 2013), by San Francisco chef Daniel Patterson. Through beautifully shot recipes for dishes that range from the more familiar (poached and grilled lamb with chard) to the maverick (butter-roasted morels with popcorn), he strikes a balance between communicating techniques with precision and leaving room for cooks to find their own way. Studying its pages, I came to a technique that was new to me: roasting carrots on a bed of coffee beans. There was no cook time, just the instruction to bake the vegetables until "very tender." *Don't pay attention to me, Patterson seemed to be saying, just focus on your carrots.* So I focused. As the carrots roasted, sweetening and deepening their flavors, I checked on them, considering how they'd play with the dish's other components—crème fraîche, rolled oats with honey and butter, and olive oil. I wasn't mindlessly following instructions, I was cooking, with my senses fully engaged. Eventually, the smoky coffee flavor worked its way through and tasted like it belonged. The carrots felt perfectly soft; they were done. And they tasted wonderful. —Tejal Rao

Eastern Promise

After years of turmoil, Albania preserves a rich culinary heritage—one that embraces the eclectic influences of its storied past



MY FIRST two days in Albania's capital city, Tirana, where I've come to research a novel I'm writing about an Albanian immigrant who moves to New York, I have no idea what I'm eating. In Blloku—the now fashionable neighborhood that was once the private enclave of feared communist dictator Enver Hoxha—most of the stylish new restaurants have menus translated into English. Still, they don't offer a lot of guidance, and the waiters, however friendly, speak only Albanian. What would I like for dinner? Cigars? Roast Mrs. Goat? Sheep interiors? *Sheep interiors?*

I keep pointing to various items, hoping for the best. And never—not once—do I have a bad meal. Mystery dish after mystery dish, the food is astonishingly fresh, delicately spiced, and comforting. Forty-eight hours after I land, in the central market in Tirana,

I think of my Albanian neighbor in Manhattan who warned me, "Don't eat any street food. Don't go near any street food." I'd nodded obediently then, but now I find myself eyeing a sheep's head rotating on a spit in the market. The only thing that stops me from buying one is that the sheep seem to be so dolefully eyeing me back.

This visit is my first to Albania, and I'm venturing into culinary terra incognita. It's years after Hoxha forbade Albanians from traveling and besieged them with propaganda about the evils of the West, years after the communist rulers were overthrown in 1991, and a 1997 banking scandal led to the collapse of the entire economy. Albanians are acutely aware that they are in the process of entering a brave new world, while trying to preserve what was valuable about the old one. And luckily, much of what seems worth preserving has

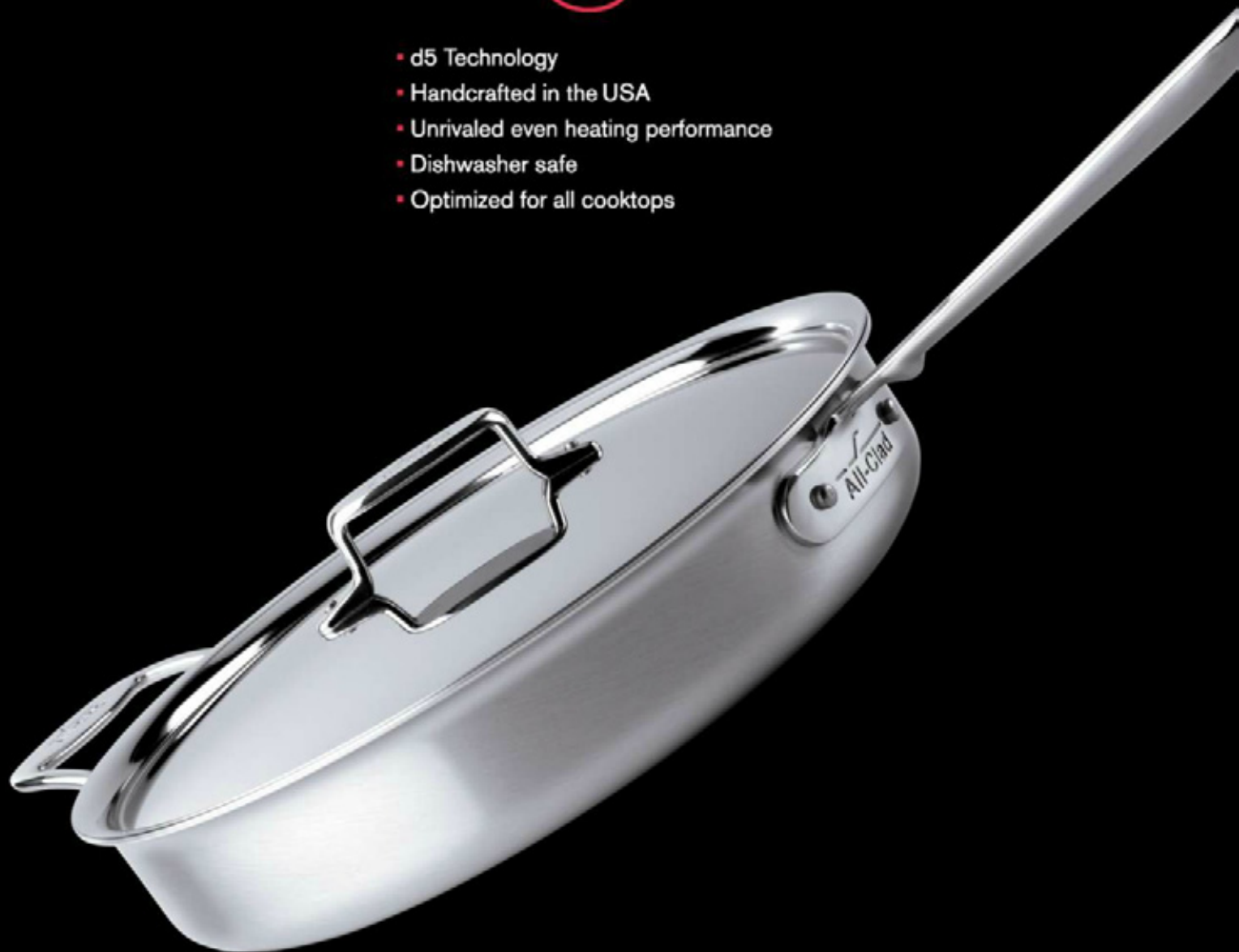
to do with food.

Over the course of the two weeks I'm here, I register how much Albanian cuisine reflects the influence of the invaders who have conquered and occupied the country throughout its troubled history. At a dinner party in Tirana, a group of writers ironically thank the Ottoman Empire for baklava, the best thing, they claim, to have come from centuries of Turkish rule. In fact, much about Albania's cuisine feels tinged with Middle Eastern influences. The *köfte* is reminiscent of those in Istanbul and Tehran. Likewise, the egg, rice, and lemon soup; stuffed grape leaves; and the *tarator* (made from cucumbers, yogurt, and dill) are similar to those in Greece, a country with which Albania has long been in

Revelers gather for an outdoor feast in the Albanian countryside.

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AGENDA

November 2013

2 CHESAPEAKE OYSTERFEST

Saint Michaels, Maryland
At the waterfront campus of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, briny local oysters are cooked into fritters, fried and stuffed into oyster sandwiches, or simply slurped raw. Fishermen on docked boats explain how they harvest the mollusks using a centuries-old method known as hand tonging, maneuvering 30-foot-long wooden tongs to pull oysters from their beds. Info: cbmm.org/oysterfest



3 FESTA DA CASTANHA

(Chestnut Festival)
Curral das Freiras, Madeira, Portugal
To celebrate the chestnut harvest, Curral das Freiras, a mountain village in the Portuguese archipelago of Madeira, serves up *sopa de castanha*, a chestnut soup of salted pork, sweet potatoes, and beans; *bolo de castanha*, soft, dense chestnut cakes; and warming chestnut liqueur. Info: visitingmadeira.com

3-7 DIWALI

(Festival of Lights)
Nationwide, India
In homes across India, the beginning of the Hindu new year is celebrated by performing Lakshmi Puja, a ritual to worship the goddess of wealth. The best way to please Lakshmi is by lighting oil lamps and offering sweets, which make her feel welcome. Revelers nibble on *barfi* (a cake made of powdered cashew nuts and sugar), *halwa* (grated carrot cooked with milk and sugar), and *gulab jamun* (spongy, doughnut-like milk treats soaked in rose-scented syrup).



12 ART AND APPETITE: AMERICAN PAINTING, CULTURE, AND CUISINE

Chicago
The Art Institute of Chicago explores food in culture through 200 years of art, including 19th-century still lifes and more recent works like Claes Oldenburg's *Sculpture in the Form of a Fried Egg*, a canvas likeness 10 feet in diameter. A special section charts representations of Thanksgiving in popular culture, including Roy Lichtenstein's oil painting *Turkey*, a (continued on page 28)



conflict. Italy left its stamp in the country's omnipresent pizzerias.

Albanians would be quick to tell you that their version of Balkan cuisine is the best. And I find that hard to argue. The upside of the time warp in which their culture still partly exists is that it's been spared the damage that modern technology—pesticides and herbicides, excessive processing, long-distance transportation—has done to our food supply. When Lavdie Shehu, the chef at Tirana's rustic *Sofra e Ariut* restaurant,

beans cooked until they become extraordinarily creamy. These dishes are followed by warm entrées like *harapash*, a cornmeal stew made with mint, walnuts, and diced lamb liver, and *persesh*, a Thanksgiving-esque cornbread stuffing soaked in rich stock with bits of chicken or meats like mutton or beef. It's one of my favorites and even makes it into my book entitled *My New American Life* (I give the protagonist's grandmother a killer version).

Despite myriad regional specialties, everyone I ask seems



serves me "country chicken," the tiny succulent bird makes even our most pampered free-range chickens seem flavorless and wan. Most restaurants bake their own bread, and at the markets, it's common to see women selling rich yellow butter they churned at home.

Those markets also boast snack stalls. Grape leaves taste like they were picked minutes before being stuffed with rice and served warm; the "cigars" that puzzled me turn out to be rolls of phyllo stuffed with cheese and herbs.

At sit-down meals there are dozens of varieties of olives, salads, platters of pickled cabbage, peppers, eggplant, and large white

to have the same favorite foods. One of the most popular is *tavë kosi*, a simple dish that is beloved throughout the country, and which I sample at a friend's home in the countryside. The dish consists of chunks of lamb and rice simmered until tender, then baked under a puffy crust of yogurt. Yogurt is ubiquitous in Albanian cuisine; it appears in everything from soups and drinks to sauces and sides. This yogurt is clean and pure, made a stone's throw away at a nearby dairy. Albania has historically been a dairy-producing country, owing, no doubt, to the well-fed cows I see grazing during my drive up. As I dig into my *tavë*

kosi, the lamb shreds easily under my fork, each rice kernel is swollen with savory broth, and the yogurt provides a tangy counterpoint to it all. It's my first country meal, and for me it defines the very essence of Albanian food: fresh, simple, and resourceful.

—Francine Prose

• Tavë Kosi

(Albanian Baked Lamb and Rice with Yogurt)

SERVES 8-10

Garlicky lamb and rice baked under a thick, tart veil of yogurt (pictured left) is a dish beloved throughout Albania.

- 6 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 tbsp. olive oil, preferably Lucini brand (see page 104)
- 2 lb. lamb shoulder, trimmed and cut into 1 1/2" pieces
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1/2 cup flour
- 3 tbsp. long grain white rice
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 3 tbsp. finely chopped oregano
- 4 cups plain yogurt
- 1/8 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- 5 eggs

1 Heat 3 tbsp. butter and the oil in a 6-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Season lamb with salt and pepper and toss with 1/4 cup flour. Working in batches, cook lamb, turning as needed, until browned, 10-12 minutes. Add rice, garlic, and 1/2 cup water; boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook, covered, until rice is just tender, about 18 minutes. Stir in oregano, salt, and pepper and transfer to a 9" x 13" baking dish; set aside.

2 Heat oven to 375°. Melt remaining butter in a 2-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Whisk in remaining flour; cook until smooth, 2 minutes. Remove from heat; whisk in yogurt, nutmeg, eggs, salt, and pepper until smooth. Pour yogurt sauce evenly over lamb mixture. Bake until golden and the lamb is tender, 45-60 minutes.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ROB WILSON/ALAMY; INGALLS PHOTOGRAPHY; COURTESY ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO (BAPHA/LE PIALE, STRAWBERRIES, NUTS, & CITRUS, 1802, GIFT OF JAMIE J. AND MARSHALL FIELDS); ALEX TRENDY/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC




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Eat Street

LONSDALE STREET, DANDENONG, AUSTRALIA

Dandenong, an emerging suburb about 20 miles southeast of Melbourne, is the city's most culturally diverse hub, heavily populated by expat Lebanese, Greeks, Uighurs, and descendants of Afghan camel drivers who first landed in Australia during the 1860s gold rush. The outstanding markets, bakeries, and cafés concentrated on the blocks along Lonsdale Street testify to the neighborhood's vibrancy, a signal of Australia's increasingly polyglot foodways. —Shane Mitchell

A1 Lebanese Bakery 201-203

Lonsdale Street At this bakery-café, display cases are heaped with honeyed sweets, while in back, ovens turn out pizzas topped with *za'atar*, a mix of wild thyme, spices, and sesame seeds. Try the cardamom espresso with *znoud el sit*, a tubular cream-filled Lebanese pastry.

Dandenong Market Cleeland Street

Established in 1866, this farmers' market and food hall reflects the area's diversity, offering everything from Asian longan fruit to the Afghan grapes known as *sultanas*. Stop by Sam's Spice & Grocery stall, which specializes in aromatic spice blends, nuts, and dried fruits.

Marmara Halal Meats 266-270

Lonsdale Street Offal is prized at this Halal butchery, where hijab-clad housewives discuss dinner plans with the staff. Refrigerated deli cases contain beef tendons, standard cuts, and kebab marinades. The sausages, including *sucuk*, paprika-spiked ground lamb, are prepared in-house.

Sahar Takeaway 252-254 Thomas

Street Be sure to stop by this Afghani takeout for its succulent lamb and chicken kebabs, grilled on long skewers over a bed of glowing charcoal by owner Reza Akbari.

Salang Restaurant and Café 345

Lonsdale Street Kabul natives Nargez and Saleem Bahrami bake garlicky naan and pumpkin-stuffed flatbreads. Don't miss the *ashak*, plump leek dumplings topped with a hearty tomato and kidney bean sauce, dollops of tangy yogurt, and dried mint.

Clockwise from top left: A customer at A1 Bakery; sausages at Marmara Halal Meats; produce shopping at Dandenong Market; *ashak* at Salang Restaurant; waiting for orders at Sahar Takeaway; pizzas topped with *za'atar* at A1 Bakery.



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The Dish

SOUP TO SHORE

Northern Magic was a sailboat built by a Canadian dentist who had put his heart into constructing his dreamboat—quite literally, for as soon as the ship was launched, he dropped dead of a heart attack. His widow asked my sea-faring boyfriend, Bones, to sail the boat from Trinidad up to Tortola in the British Virgin Islands, and put it up for sale. I went along for the ride. It was a maiden voyage to remember. Everything broke. We limped into St. Lucia, where we spent weeks waiting for parts. In the interim, Bones introduced me to the lively marketplace in the capital city of Castries. I'd never been anywhere so enthralling: The stalls spilled over with papayas, plantains, and breadfruit, and the chickens were sold still squawking. I fell in love with the food of the Caribbean; its vivid flavors don't pull any punches. We bought green-skinned calabaza pumpkins and fiery Scotch bonnet peppers, and while Bones fixed the boat, I made pumpkin soup. The warm roti flatbreads we ate with the soup were cheap, the beer ice-cold. Such a heavenly spot to be stranded. Of course, not long after, I married Bones. Any guy who can fix both a boat and a perfect rum punch is a keeper. —*Abigail Blake, Winston-Salem, North Carolina*

*"The Dish" is a column featuring stories and recipes from *SAVEUR* readers. To submit a story and recipe, visit SAVEUR.COM/THEDISH.*



Caribbean Pumpkin Soup

SERVES 6

Green-skinned calabaza can be found in local Latin and Caribbean markets, but butternut squash is a fine substitute for the pumpkin in this cream-laced soup (pictured above).

- 3 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 medium white onion, minced
- 1 Scotch bonnet pepper, stemmed, seeded, and minced (optional)
- 3 lb. pumpkin, such as calabaza or butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into 1/2" pieces
- 4 cups chicken stock
- 4 sprigs thyme
- 2 sprigs parsley
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 cup milk
- 1/4 cup heavy cream
- 1/2 tbsp. mild curry powder
- 1 tsp. fresh lime juice

- 1/4 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Crème fraîche, for garnish

Melt butter in a 6-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Add garlic, onion, and, if using, Scotch bonnet; cook until golden, about 8 minutes. Add pumpkin, stock, thyme, parsley, and bay leaf; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium; cook until pumpkin is very tender, 30–35 minutes. Discard thyme, parsley, and bay leaf; working in batches, purée soup in a blender until smooth. Return soup to saucepan and add milk, cream, curry powder, lime juice, nutmeg, salt, and pepper; simmer until slightly thick, 4–6 minutes. Ladle soup into bowls; garnish with a swirl of crème fraîche.

One Good Bottle In the early 1800s, at the estuary of Scotland's River Wick, Sir William Pulteney commissioned a new harbor, creating Europe's largest herring fishing port. The Pulteney Distillery was established here in 1826, with many fishermen making scotch on the side. The fishery withered out, but the North Sea's influence can still be found in this whisky. The distillery's single malts range from 12 to 40 years old, but **Old Pulteney 21 Year Old** (\$135) is a particularly lovely expression. Aged in both bourbon and fino sherry barrels, its orchard-fruit aroma disguises a bracing seaside tang, sharpened by a relatively high 46 percent alcohol. I like to sip it neat, but a splash of mineral water or an ice cube enhances its sweetness, making it a gentle digestif after the holiday feast. —*Camper English*



FROM TOP: PENNY DE LOS SANTOS; INGALLS PHOTOS; JACOB



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TERRANEA
L.A.'S OCEANFRONT RESORT

(continued from page 22)

Pop Art portrait of the holiday bird rendered in neon yellow. Through January 27, 2014. Info: artice.edu

13-17

DEVOUR! THE FOOD FILM FEST

Wolfville, Nova Scotia

Thirty food-focused documentaries, dramas, and short films from all over the world will be screened at this five-day Nova Scotian festival, including *Sikh Formaggio*, a Kickstarter-funded documentary about a community of Sikhs in northern Italy who make parmigiano-reggiano, and *Now, Forager*, a drama about a mushroom-foraging couple. Info: devourfest.com

14-16

WORLDS OF FLAVOR: KITCHENS CONNECTED

Napa Valley, California

Chefs from around the globe gather in Napa to explore the themes that connect their kitchens. Over three packed days, visitors can eat dishes cooked by renowned Nordic chefs like Steve Jilleba and Esben Holmboe Bang, take classes on fermentation, or attend panels on everything from sea vegetables to new cuts of Wagyu beef. Info: worldsofflavor.com

15-17

SALON SAVEURS DES PLAISIRS GOURMANDS

(Flavors of Gourmet Delights)

Paris

Paris' three-day tasting bonanza features France's most celebrated producers. Sample smoked trout from the Pyrenees; hand-churned butter from cult dairyman Jean-Yves Bordier; Périgord truffles; and *canelé de Bordeaux*, a custardy cake encased in a caramelized sugar shell from Parisian Pâtisserie Lemoine. Info: salon-saveurs.com



29

Anniversary

HORN & HARDART AUTOMAT COFFEE WENT FROM A NICKEL TO A DIME

1950, New York City

For three decades at the Horn & Hardart Automat, a restaurant chain where food was dispensed from coin-operated vending machines, for just five cents New Yorkers could enjoy the best joe in town. During the 1930s, the nickel cup was a city mainstay, immortalized in Irving Berlin's Depression-era melody "Let's Have Another Cup of Coffee." After doubling prices, the Automat lost its cachet: Coffee sales plunged from 70 million to 45 million cups a year, and many customers never returned. The last Automat closed in 1991.



Spaghetti Western

One of my favorite places to eat in Tokyo doesn't serve what most people would recognize as Japanese food. At Yoshikami, a little restaurant in the old Asakusa neighborhood, the menu features beef croquettes; *ebi gratin*, essentially macaroni and cheese with shrimp; and "Napolitan," spaghetti sautéed with ketchup, bell pepper, and mushrooms (pictured above; for recipe, see saveur.com/spaghettiwestern). These dishes belong to a category of Japanese cooking called *yoshoku*—adaptations of European and American foods that trace their origins to the late 19th century, after Japan opened itself to the West—and for me, they represent the ultimate comfort food. When I was little, I'd accompany my dad to Yoshikami for dinner. To an impressionable eight-year-old, this was dinner and a show. White-toqued chefs worked behind a dining counter, tall flames shooting up around the skillets as they cooked. I would order the *hamburg*, a fried patty of ground beef and panko that was served not on a bun with a side of fries like its American antecedent, but with white rice and steamed carrots. My dad, meanwhile, would tuck into a Western-style slab of sirloin steak. We went a couple of times a year; it felt like a very special treat. I recently returned to Yoshikami for the first time in nearly 30 years. The restaurant was just as I remembered it, with its checked tablecloths and bustling chefs behind the counter. They were still using those same old recipes—the menu hadn't changed a bit. I ordered a *hamburg*, and then I remembered my dad, thought what the heck, and ordered a steak too. —*Tadashi Ono*



“Being creative with ingredients gives you the ability to build deeper flavors.”

“Enhancing the complexity and depth of a dish all comes down to the details. Fresh herbs, garlic, shallots and thyme really make a big difference. Have them—and butter—at the ready, especially when searing a steak. Add the butter to make a beautiful, brown glacé; toss in the herbs at the end to add aromatic essence to the meat.”



Executive Chef Brendan McHale
TastingTable.com, New York

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Master Class Series

Watch Brendan as he shares details for a distinctive dinner party, and see more experts, at jennair.com/culinary



Home Room

Chef Lorena Garcia's kitchen is inspired by her Venezuelan roots

I GREW UP IN the mountains of Caracas, Venezuela, and our kitchen was very big. I would spend a lot of time in that room with my mother, an amazing cook who loved to entertain guests there. I've never had a kitchen that lived up to my memories of the one from my childhood. So when, a few years ago, after decades of apartment living, I decided to have a house built in Miami Beach, I made the kitchen the centerpiece, with lots of room for guests. My architect asked how much space I needed for the kitchen, and I told him 1,000 square feet! Big, I know, but when I have visitors I cook a lot of food, and I wanted to be able to feed as many people as possible.

The kitchen at Lorena Garcia Cocina, the restaurant in Miami where I spend most of my time, is very industrial, so I wanted my home kitchen to be a more relaxed place to cook and write. I kept it light and clean: white countertops and cupboards, polished concrete floors. The Latin foods I make, like salsas and chiles and sofrito, are so colorful that the kitchen works sort of as a blank canvas that lets the vibrant dishes shine. Everything was designed for how I cook at home; the cabinets and counters were built according to my height, and there's a pizza oven, a flattop on the stove for toasting tortillas, an induction cooktop for long-simmered stews, and a huge island with a gas range built into it for preparing dishes that require quick, intense fire.

I travel so much these days that when I'm back in Miami, I almost always want to eat at home. Usually I invite my friends and family over. We gather around the huge kitchen island and make tacos, or I bake pizzas for everyone and do my take on bananas Foster, which I make with plantains instead of bananas.

When I'm cooking at home alone, I turn off most of the lights, except the one in the oven hood and a few of the track lights above, so they focus only on the parts of the kitchen where I'm cooking. I like to play music too, so there's a speaker system that I can plug my iPod into. I'll put on a little salsa, some merengue, even Jennifer Lopez—anything I can dance to while I cook. —Lorena Garcia



I wanted the kitchen to be as well lit as possible, so I installed track lighting, which lets me turn a spotlight on the part of the kitchen where I'm working.

An induction cooktop keeps my kitchen cool—even when I'm making dishes that cook low and slow, like black bean guiso.

My grandmother cooked with heavy cast-iron pots called *calderos*. I just developed a line of cookware based on them, though mine are nonstick and far lighter.

People often associate me with the chopping I do on TV. Most of it's done with Japanese knives. I prefer them for their sturdiness and heft.

I put in one wall of cement tiles painted ocean blue to remind me of what's right outside my door: Miami Beach.

I grind herbs and spices for sauces and vinaigrettes using my mother's mortar and pestle, which helps retain the flavors better than a food processor can.

NATIONS RISING

On a recent visit to Arizona, I stop for lunch at the Desert Rain Café, on the Tohono O'odham reservation 60 miles west of Tucson. The café serves dishes built on the ingredients that sustained the Native American tribe, who farmed and foraged in the Sonoran Desert for generations. I try some cactus buds, which look like asparagus tips and taste like artichokes. Boiled and tossed in a citrus dressing, they are so delicious that I buy a bag of dried buds to take home with me. The Tohono O'odham is just one of many Native American communities across the country reclaiming a culinary heritage, returning to heirloom crops and wild foraged foods—and in the process, bringing back flavors nearly lost over the past centuries of cultural disruption. Here are six ways to savor the revival.

—Karen Shimizu

The group Tohono O'odham Community Action (TOCA)



coordinates the harvesting of **cholla cactus buds**, which are de-thorned and dried. After being reconstituted in boiling water, the buds are bright green, meaty, and tender, with a

taste similar to an artichoke. **Tepary beans** are a flavor-packed desert legume. The white variety is slightly sweet—wonderful for hummus—while brown tepary beans are dense



and earthy. **Saguaro cactus syrup**, another desert ingredient from TOCA, is made by boiling cactus fruit over a mesquite fire. It has a smoky, molasses-like flavor that complements grilled meats, and is outstanding drizzled on

Manchego cheese. **Wild rice**, the dark brown, nutty grains of an aquatic grass, is harvested on the Ojibwe reservation in northern Minnesota. The Ojibwe traditionally mixed the grains with maple syrup and cranberries for a sweet breakfast, but it's also great in stuffing and savory pilafs. To make

parched corn, the Santa Ana Pueblo in New Mexico grow, roast, and salt indigenous blue corn. With a taste that falls between peanuts and popcorn, it's a crunchy, addictive snack. Typically used in *atole*,



a warm, porridge-like drink, Santa Ana Pueblo's **roasted blue corn meal** has a ripe, sweet corn flavor that shines in muffins or cornbread.



BEANS AND RICE.



THE PANTRY, page 104: Information on visiting Melbourne's Lonsdale Street, ordering Old Pulteney scotch whisky, and more.

INGREDIENT



Southern Belle

The pecan, the South's favorite nut, adds buttery, earthy richness to all sorts of holiday foods

BY WENDELL BROCK

ON A COOL, WET November morning at the height of the pecan-harvesting season, Al Pearson is showing me around the central Georgia farm that has been in his family for five generations. The scale of the agriculture—2,500 acres of Elliotts, Stuarts, Schleys, Desirables, and other pecan varieties—puts me in a state of nutty wonder. Pearson, a garrulous 63-year-old, is talking

up a storm while driving his Ford pickup so furiously through a pecan grove that I fear a tree limb might break the windshield. Stopping his chatter and his truck for a minute, he cocks his ear to discern the sound of the harvesting equipment he wants me to see. The machines are out there. He senses them with his finely tuned antenna. Then he hits the gas and goes back to his stories.

In a good year, Pearson Farm, which spreads out around the town of Fort Valley south of Macon, will harvest between 2 and 3.5 million pounds of pecans, making it one of the top growers in America's number

WENDELL BROCK is an Atlanta-based food and culture writer. His last article for *SAVEUR* was "Sweet and Tart" (October 2011).

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: LEFT: INGALLS PHOTOGRAPHY; GRANT HELLMAN PHOTOGRAPHY; ALAMY PHOTOGRAPHY; LONDON NOZOMAN

one state for pecan production. Many of the nuts will be shipped unshelled to China in 1,200- to 1,400-pound bags to be eaten primarily out of hand. (In recent years, Chinese demand for pecans has sent prices to historic highs, and a few of Pearson's pistol-packing farmer buddies have chased nut bandits off their land.) Some will turn up in gourmet gift baskets or be transformed into cookies, cakes, and candies by home cooks in the South and beyond. And some, Pearson informs me proudly, will end up on the menus of high-end establishments like Thomas Keller's New York City restaurant Per Se, where they star in Keller's highfalutin version of bourbon pecan pie. We climb out of the truck, and I notice Pearson watching his step. When he tells me that each nut in this pecan-carpeted orchard is worth a nickel, I'm floored. (In 2011, during the height of the pecan boom, unshelled pecans were fetching an average of \$2.43 a pound.) To think I used to sell my family's pecans for a quarter a pound back in the 1960s. From here on, I tiptoe.

LIKE MANY GEORGIA natives, I have been crazy for pecans for as long as I can remember. Nanny, my maternal grandmother, would let us gather the nuts that fell from the magnificent old trees around her south Georgia home. Too arthritic to stoop, Nanny plucked pecans from the ground with what we called her "pecan-picker-upper," a broomstick attached to a metal box with a wire coil on one end. Espying a handful of pecans on the ground, Nanny would press down on her little gizmo, and—*presto!*—the nuts would pop magically into the cage. She would dump them into the deep pockets of her white canvas apron. Later, sitting at her kitchen table, she would shell, sort, and chop the nuts for fruitcakes stuffed with candied cherries, pineapple, citron, and pecans by the cupful.

Because pecan harvest coincides with Thanksgiving, every Southern holiday meal, in my experience, is a festival of pecans. My mother and our neighbor Fannie Boutwell would make nut-laden treats to give as gifts: pecan brittle; chewy, boozy bourbon balls; candied nuts glistening with a balsamic and brown sugar glaze; and snow-white meringues called divinity. My job was

to press one pecan half into each little ball of divinity. (I loved doing that.)

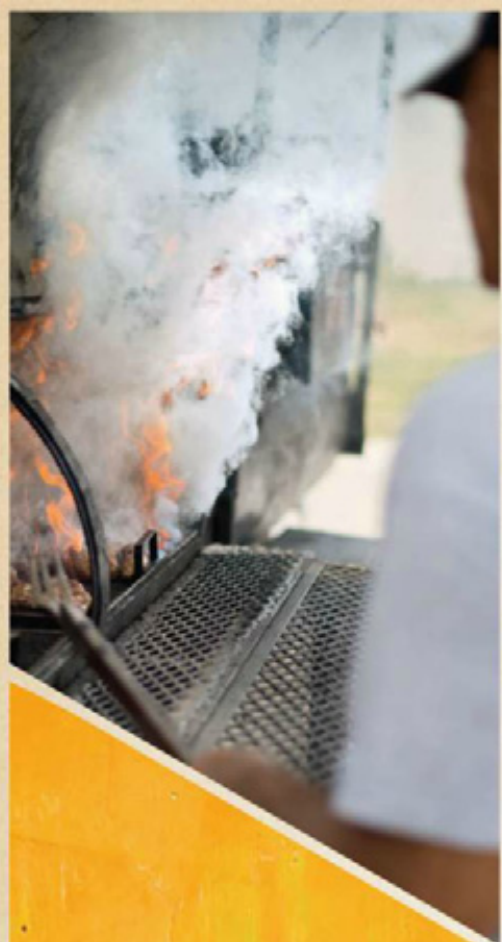
The women of the family would bake perfect halves of the craggy, lobed nuts onto cheese wafers or make batches of spiced nuts smoky with paprika—addictive snacks so good we'd all fill up on them before the holiday meals. And if we ran out of nuts, there was always a tree nearby. When stubborn trees refused to release their clusters of pecans, grown men would climb into the sky with bamboo poles and beat them out. Not that we weren't fond of those trees. My friend Sarah "Tweet" Moore, a vivacious 90-year-old, speaks wistfully of the towering specimen that graced the dairy farm she and her husband, William Walter Moore Sr., ran outside Athens from 1950 to 1995. The Moores and their four children pampered that prized tree, and it returned the favor with an abundance of nuts. This time of year, Tweet's gnarled hands are dusted white from showering powdered sugar on buttery,

Crack open the pecan shell, brown and mottled with black, and there it is: the rich, buttery seed we love to eat

pecan-filled orbs called wedding cookies, a specialty for which she is famed in her circle.

Indeed, it seems as if every Georgia home cook has his or her favorite recipe. In Atlanta, where I live, my favorite pecan dish is from Sweet Auburn Bakery, a downtown bakery where chef Sonya Jones makes syrupy sticky buns drizzled with caramel sauce and sprinkled with crisped, coffee-colored pecan halves. When I head south of the city to visit family, I sometimes pull over at the roadside store of Ellis Bros. Pecans, a family business founded by Elliott Ellis in 1978. After one Thanksgiving, I tucked my head into the office there and saw Cile Ellis, Elliott's 76-year-old wife, sitting primly behind a desk. We talked pecans, and she showed me the clan's spiral-bound cookbook with its recipes for her mother-in-law Irene's pecan brittle, Irene's Uncooked Fruitcake, and a bar called Neiman Marcus, made with Duncan Hines cake mix and chopped nuts.

By the time the next year's pecan harvest rolled around, I had insinuated myself into the Ellis kitchen. While a sweet potato casserole encrusted with pecans bubbled in the oven, Cile poured me a glass of iced tea and put out salty, buttered nuts and glazed ones coated in sugar and sour cream. I asked



OUR
VERSION
OF FUSION
FOOD.

Facing page from top left: pan-seared trout with pecan brown butter sauce; a mature pecan tree; pecan cheese wafers; Georgia home cook Tweet Moore. Recipes begin on page 38.

about the cream cake I spied under a glass dome on her counter, and she corrected me: "It's *pecan* cream," the special cake she serves to her women's literary group, the Thalian Club, sliced and plated alongside a precise "six to eight" salted pecans and served with a cup of coffee. I take a bite—three unbelievably moist layers of nuts, coconut, and cream cheese frosting. This is no everyday dessert. It's a showstopper.

SOUTH OF THE Pearson and Ellis dynasties, my family lived at the bottom edge of the state's sprawling 160,000-acre pecan belt. Dougherty, Mitchell, and Lee counties—north of our home in Decatur County—form the historic hub of the Georgia pecan industry. There, as Kathleen Purvis describes it in her book *Pecans* (University of North Carolina Press, 2012), "The huge trees are planted in long rows, often covering acres



and marching right up to the porches of gracious old homes." Much of the state's crop, she writes, derives from the early 20th century, when developers lured settlers to rural Georgia by planting trees on five-acre parcels and advertising them as lucrative pecan plantations. Around the same time, farmers like Pearson's grandfather John discovered the benefits of raising pecans alongside Georgia's most iconic crop, peaches. Conveniently, peaches are harvested in summer, pecans in autumn. At 12 years, as pecan trees start to mature, the peach trees begin to run their course and can be yanked up to allow the pecans to sprawl. The practice of planting pecans and peaches in tandem continues today in the region around Macon.

From left: Sonya Jones of Atlanta's Sweet Auburn Bakery; Cile Ellis' pecan cream cake (see page 38 for recipe).





But the pecan's history in this country predates real-estate and crop-rotating schemes. A species of hickory that is believed to have originated in Mexico and Texas and spread northward, the deciduous trees grew wild in America long before European settlers moved in. "In colonial times, most of the nuts were from the Illinois region, along the Mississippi River Valley," Lenny Wells, a horticulturalist with the University of Georgia extension service in Tifton, tells me. Foraged by trappers and traders and sent east to be sold, they were given the botanical name *Carya illinoensis*, or Illinois nut tree.

That's pure Yankee crazy talk, if you ask me. Not only did Southerners fast take charge of pecans' cultivation, but also, pecans aren't technically nuts. Coddled in an elegant veneer-thin oval shell, they are drupes, fruits with a central stone surrounded by a husk. Their fleshy green hulls eventually turn brown and open to spill what we recognize as the nut. The unshelled pecan, brown and mottled with black, is the equivalent of a peach pit. Crack it open, and there it is: the rich, buttery seed that we love to eat. Compared

Butter, brown sugar, and toasted pecans: In the South, that combination of flavors is the greatest of autumn's comforts

with most other tree nuts, including almonds and walnuts, pistachios and chestnuts, pecans have more fat. Their oil-rich creaminess and soft bite help make not only sweet but savory dishes—wild rice "dirtied" with chicken livers and nuts, Thanksgiving's bread stuffing, pan-seared trout drizzled in pecan-butter sauce—taste better.

BACK ON PEARSON'S FARM, he and I have found the harvesting equipment he'd wanted to show me. Vehicles with forklike prongs scoot around, grabbing massive trees by the trunks and shaking the bejesus out of them. Next come the sweeping machines, which blow the pecans into orderly rows for the mechanized harvesters that follow. When a harvester's basket is full, it sidles up next to a big truck. A worker pushes a button and the container tips, spilling nuts into the truck bed like an avalanche of marbles. It's a delicious cacophony—Nanny dumping out her little metal pecan-picker-upper a million times over. But the most majestic thing is seeing those big shakers do their handiwork. As the nuts fall from the sky, branches spring up

beNATIVE

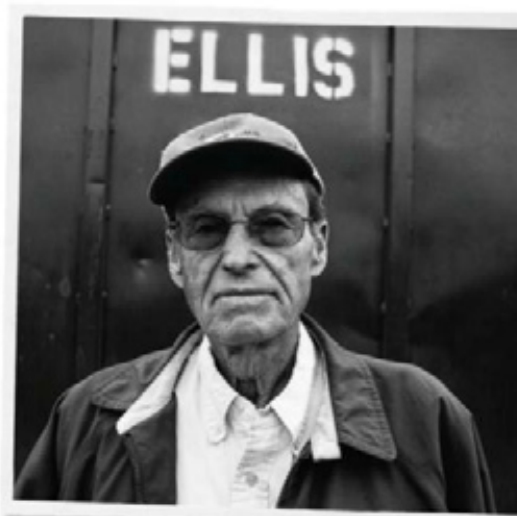
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Clockwise from top left: Tweet Moore holds a dish of her wedding cookies; pecan sticky buns; Elliot Ellis of Ellis Bros. Pecans, a nut farm located in Vienna, Georgia; dirty rice. Recipes begin on page 38.

like the limbs of a Christmas tree suddenly unburdened of ornaments, or a mighty oak evacuated by a murder of crows.

Pearson tells me he wishes his entire farm, including his 1,400 acres of peaches, was planted in pecans. Peaches are fickle, fussy, labor intensive. They can cause a farmer to lose sleep at night. Pecans are sturdy, forgiving, and strong enough to withstand the assault of these shaking, blowing, and sucking machines. They are also very, very tasty.

"I just like to eat 'em," Pearson says, cracking into a preternaturally large Desirable and munching on its thumb-size kernel. I bite into one and it is a revelation of freshness, almost

shockingly rich and supple. High-yield Sturarts, a good all-around nut, are Georgia's most common cultivar and probably what I have eaten all my life. Elliotts, some of Pearson's favorites, are petite, round, and far more luscious. (See "Not Just One Nut," page 40.) But these huge, meaty Desirables aren't too shabby, either. No wonder China covets them.

By now Pearson, an amateur thespian who once gave a reading of Truman Capote's pecan-filled story "A Christmas Memory" at a community theater, is waxing poetic on all things pecan, nearly drooling at the thought of his late mama's syrupy pecan pie or an extravagant portion of butter-pecan

ice cream. You name it; if it's got pecans in it, he likes it. "When they bake a pound cake, and somehow in there they fold in a streak of pecans and sugar and cinnamon, I can't hardly stand it! It's too much for me! It overwhelms me!"

Crunching, I giggle. I know what he means. Grabbing a few bags of Elliotts, I dream of the baking I'll do once I get home. Maybe I'll try one of those fluffy layer cakes. Or a batch of sticky buns. Just as I felt when I was a kid, I can't wait to dig into a pan of those warm, soft pastries. Butter, brown sugar, and toasted pecans: For a Southerner like me, that combination of flavors is the greatest of autumn's comforts. 🐿️

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❖ Dirty Rice

SERVES 6

Pecans, chicken livers, and vegetables add layers of flavor to wild rice in this recipe (pictured on page 36) from pastry chef Ben Mims.

- 2 chicken livers
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1/2 cup thinly sliced white button mushrooms
- 1 small green bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and finely chopped
- 1 small yellow onion, finely chopped
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 cup roughly chopped pecans
- 3/4 cup wild rice
- 2 1/2 cups beef stock
- 1/2 cup heavy cream

Heat oven to 350°. Boil livers and 2 cups water in a 4-qt. saucepan until tender, about 5 minutes. Drain livers, discarding water, and let cool; mash with a fork until smooth. Wipe pan dry and melt butter over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms, bell pepper, onion, salt, and pepper; cook, stirring, until golden, 13–15 minutes. Add half the pecans, plus livers and rice; stir to coat in butter. Add stock and bring to a boil; cover and transfer to oven. Bake until rice is tender, 1–1 1/2 hours. Remove from oven, uncover, and stir in remaining pecans and the cream; let sit for 5 minutes before serving.

Pan-Seared Trout with Pecan Brown Butter Sauce

SERVES 4

Purée pecans enrich a butter sauce for pan-seared filets of trout (pictured on page 32).

- 12 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 3/4 cup roughly chopped pecans
- 1 scallion, thinly sliced
- 2 tsp. grated lemon zest, plus 2 tsp. juice
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1/2 cup flour
- 4 6-oz. boneless, skinless rainbow trout filets
- 1 tbsp. finely chopped parsley, for garnish
- 1 lemon, cut into wedges, for serving

1 Purée 8 tbsp. butter, 1/2 cup pecans, the scallion, lemon zest and juice, salt, and pepper in a small food processor until smooth; set aside.

2 Melt 2 tbsp. of remaining butter in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat; place flour on a plate. Season 2 filets trout with salt and pepper; dredge in flour, shaking off excess. Cook, flipping once,

until golden and cooked through, 3–4 minutes. Repeat with remaining butter and trout. Transfer filets to serving plates. Add remaining chopped pecans to skillet; cook, until toasted, 2–3 minutes. Add butter mixture; cook until browned, about 4 minutes. Spoon pecan sauce over trout. Garnish with parsley and serve with lemon wedges.

Pecan Cheese Wafers

MAKES ABOUT 2 1/2 DOZEN

The recipe for these crisp, spicy crackers (pictured on page 32) is adapted from *The Lee Bros. Charleston Kitchen* (Clarkson Potter, 2013).

- 6 tbsp. flour, plus more for dusting
- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/8 tsp. crushed red chile flakes
- 2 oz. shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened
- 1 tbsp. heavy cream
- 1 egg white, lightly beaten
- 1/2 cup pecan halves

1 Pulse flour, salt, and chile flakes in a food processor until combined. Add cheese, butter, and cream; pulse until dough just holds together, about 10 seconds. Form dough into a disk and wrap in plastic wrap; chill 1 hour.

2 Heat oven to 325°. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into a 10" x 12" rectangle about 1/8" thick. Using a 2" round cutter, cut out disks. Using a spatula, transfer disks to parchment paper-lined baking sheets; gather and reuse scraps. Lightly brush bottoms of pecan halves with egg white and press into tops of wafers. Bake until firm and crisp, about 15 minutes. Let cool completely before serving.

❖ Pecan Cream Cake

SERVES 8–10

Packed with coconut and pecans and covered in cream cheese frosting, this cake (pictured on page 34) is a specialty of Georgia home cook Cile Ellis.

For the cake:

- 8 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened, plus more for pans
- 2 cups flour, plus more for pans
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup vegetable shortening
- 2 cups sugar
- 5 eggs, separated
- 1 1/4 cups shredded unsweetened coconut
- 1 cup finely chopped pecans

By the Fistful

One of our favorite ways to eat pecans is out of hand, not only raw but toasted and flavored. Bite-size and buttery, the nut halves are the perfect foundation for countless spice combinations and glazes. During the holiday season, we keep bowls of the prepared nuts around for nibbling on alongside aperitifs before the meal. Below are three of our favorite pecan snack preparations. —Kellie Evans

Candied Pecans

MAKES 2 CUPS

Heat oven to 325°. Spread 2 cups pecan halves on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Bake until lightly toasted and fragrant, about 10 minutes; set aside. Boil 1/2 cup packed light brown sugar, 2 tbsp. balsamic vinegar, and 2 tbsp. olive oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Cook until mixture is foamy and slightly thickened, 2–3 minutes. Add pecans and cook, stirring constantly, until well coated, about 3 minutes. Spread on prepared baking sheet and sprinkle with 1/2 tsp. flake sea salt; let cool completely. Break into bite-size pieces before serving.



Glazed Pecans

MAKES 2 CUPS

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper; set aside. Whisk 3/4 cup sugar and 1/4 cup sour cream in a 4-qt. saucepan until smooth; bring to a boil. Cook, stirring constantly, until mixture is bubbling and thick, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in 2 cups lightly toasted pecan halves and 1/4 tsp. vanilla extract until well coated. Spread on prepared baking sheet; let cool completely. Break into bite-size pieces before serving.



Spiced Pecans

MAKES 2 CUPS

Heat oven to 300°. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper; set aside. Mix 2 tbsp. packed dark brown sugar, 2 tbsp. smoked paprika, 1 tsp. cayenne pepper, 1 tsp. kosher salt, 1/2 tsp. ground coriander, 1/4 tsp. granulated garlic, 1/4 tsp. ground cumin, and 1/8 tsp. ground allspice in a bowl. Mix 2 cups pecan halves and 1/2 beaten egg white in a bowl until combined. Toss nuts with spice mixture to coat completely. Spread on prepared baking sheet; bake until browned and crisp, 25–30 minutes. Let cool before serving.



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For the frosting:

- 8 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened
- 3 1/2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1/4 cup roughly chopped pecans, toasted

1 Make the cake: Heat oven to 350°. Butter and flour three 8" cake pans; set aside. Whisk flour, baking soda, and salt in a bowl. Whisk buttermilk and vanilla in another bowl. Cream butter, shortening, and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment until fluffy, 2-3 minutes. Add egg yolks, one at a time, beating well after each addition. On low speed, alternately add dry ingredients in 3 batches and wet ingredients in 2 batches. Increase speed to high, and beat until batter is smooth, 5-10 seconds. Whip egg whites in a bowl until stiff peaks form. Fold egg whites, coconut, and pecans into batter. Divide batter between prepared pans and smooth top with a rubber spatula; drop pans lightly on a counter to expel large air bubbles. Bake cakes until a toothpick inserted in middle comes out clean, 20-22 minutes. Let cakes cool for 20 minutes in pans; invert onto wire racks and let cool completely.

2 Make the frosting: Using a hand mixer, beat cream cheese and butter until smooth. With the motor running, slowly add sugar and vanilla; beat until smooth.

3 To assemble, place one cake layer on a cake stand and spread with 1/3 cup frosting; top with another layer and spread with 1/3 cup frosting. Top with remaining layer. Cover top and sides with remaining frosting and sprinkle top with pecans; chill cake 1 hour until frosting is firm.

❖ Pecan Sticky Buns

SERVES 12

Three types of sugar sweeten these pecan swirl buns (pictured on page 36) adapted from a recipe from Sweet Auburn Bakery in Atlanta.

- 1/4 cup water, heated to 115°
- 1 1/4-oz. package active dry yeast
- 1/2 tsp., plus 1 cup granulated sugar
- 8 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted, plus 20 tbsp., softened, and more for pan
- 1/2 cup milk, at room temperature
- 2 tbsp. packed light brown sugar
- 3/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 egg, plus 1 yolk
- 3 1/4 cups flour, plus more for dusting
- 2/3 cup packed dark brown sugar

- 1 cup finely chopped pecan pieces
- 3 tbsp. ground cinnamon

1 Combine water, yeast, and 1/2 tsp. granulated sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a hook; let sit until foamy, about 10 minutes. Stir in 1/4 cup granulated sugar, plus 8 tbsp. melted butter, milk, light brown sugar, salt, vanilla, egg, and yolk. Add flour and mix on low speed until dough forms. Increase speed to medium-high; knead until smooth, about 8 minutes. Cover dough with plastic wrap; set in a warm place until doubled in size, about 1 1/2 hours. Meanwhile, bring 10 tbsp. softened butter and dark brown sugar to a boil in a 2-qt. saucepan; cook, stirring occasionally, until sugar is melted, about 3 minutes. Pour sauce evenly into a greased 9" x 13" baking dish; sprinkle 2/3 pecans over the top. Stir remaining butter, granulated sugar, pecans, and the cinnamon in a bowl; set baking dish and filling aside.

2 On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into a 10" x 18" rectangle; spread filling evenly over dough. Working from one long end, roll dough into a log; trim ends and cut into 12 rounds. Place rounds over sauce in baking dish. Cover with plastic wrap; chill 6 hours or overnight.

3 Heat oven to 375°. Uncover buns and bring to room temperature. Bake until golden brown, about 30 minutes. Let pan cool 5 minutes, then invert onto a serving tray. Immediately spoon pecan sauce from dish over buns.

❖ Wedding Cookies

MAKES ABOUT 4 DOZEN

These crumbly powdered sugar coated cookies (pictured on page 36) are often served at Southern weddings. This recipe comes from Georgia home cook Tweet Moore.

- 16 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened
- 6 tbsp., plus 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1 1/4 cups flour
- 2 cups finely chopped pecans
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract

Heat oven to 275°. Using a hand mixer, whip butter and 6 tbsp. sugar in a bowl until fluffy. Slowly add flour; beat until combined. Stir in pecans and vanilla. Shape dough into 3/4" balls; place on parchment paper-lined baking sheets. Bake, rotating sheets halfway, until cookies are set, 25-30 minutes. Transfer cookies to a wire rack; let cool. Place remaining 1 cup sugar in a shallow dish; roll cookies in sugar until completely coated.

Not Just One Nut



We tend to think of pecans as a single nut—pecans, period. But, in reality, the pecan—from the Algonquin Indian *paccan*, meaning "nuts that require a stone to crack"—a rugged-looking, buttery Southern nut that fills our tables every holiday season, comes in more than 500 varieties. Georgia is known for its toothsome cultivars, including the most common one, the **Stuart** (top left). With its large striped brown shell and its plump straw-colored kernel, the Stuart is the quintessential pecan: nutty, sweet, and crunchy. It's a great all-purpose nut for chopping and mixing into dishes from moist pecan cream cakes and buttery wedding cookies to dirty rice. Yellowish-brown in color with a slender and smooth shell, **Schley** pecans (top right) have a higher oil content than most pecans, which gives them a concentrated nutty flavor. They're terrific for enriching sauces and are also delicious candied or coated in spices. Although smaller than most varieties, the **Elliott** pecan (bottom left) is a favorite among Georgia growers. Its sumptuous round kernel has a delicate hickory nut flavor that makes it wonderful for baked goods and for eating out of hand. A larger nut is the **Desirable** (bottom right). Prized for its easy-to-crack shell, big kernel, and robust flavor, it's ideal halved and used to decoratively top spicy cheese wafers. —Dominique Lemoine



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A high-angle photograph of two whole roasted chickens, known as Poulet Rouge, resting on a large, white, ornate oval platter. The chickens have a deep golden-brown, slightly charred skin. They are surrounded by roasted vegetables, including what appear to be mushrooms and onions. The platter has a subtle, embossed floral pattern. The background is a plain, light color.

SOURCE

Bird of Paradise

Fine French fowl alight in North Carolina's Piedmont

BY BETSY ANDREWS

I ALWAYS THOUGHT chicken was a snooze. Then poultryman Ron Joyce set me up with a long-legged beaut by the fancy name of Poulet Rouge Fermier du Piedmont. At first I scoffed at the pretense. What kind of handle was that for a broiler from North Carolina?

But then I tasted it: succulent, firm flesh dripping with robust juices that tasted of, well, chicken. It was the opposite of the insipid, flabby birds we usually eat in the States.

Seven years ago Joyce, a second-generation Carolina producer, went in search of a superior chicken, reaching across the pond for his first batch of breeder eggs from France's lauded Label Rouge program. The government-sponsored initiative began after World War II with chicken farmers intent on preserving heritage-breed *poulets fermiers*, "farm chickens." It

regulates labeling, enforcing strict standards for chicken breeding, feeding, and processing.

Joyce chose a breed called *cou nu*, or "naked neck," a tall, lean-breasted bird with an eponymous bald spot. He named his Carolina-raised variety Poulet Rouge for its rust-colored feathers and adopted French methods for raising it. At Joyce Farms, his *cou nu* live for 80 days, nearly twice as long as commodity chickens, which are bred for quick turnaround. Roomy indoor-outdoor digs allow them to exercise their muscles as they mature, metabolizing

their fat, resulting in luscious, slightly gamey meat that is prized by chefs like Gavin Kaysen of Manhattan's Café Boulud.

He loves the Poulet Rouge's thin, taut skin, which "cooks up crisp and firm, almost like pork belly."

How do the pros suggest cooking such a remarkable chicken? "Practice restraint," says Michael Schwartz, chef-owner of Michael's Genuine Food & Drink in Miami, who pan-roasts his with just salt and pepper. He's right; these birds are so flavorful I might just pull out my favorite straightforward roast chicken recipe (see saveur.com/roastchicken) and serve them instead of turkey this Thanksgiving. Prices start at \$16 for a fresh two-and-a-half-to three-pound broiler (shown roasted above) from joycefoods.com. 🐔

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Solitary Man

For one struggling artist, food was solace, and chefs the ultimate muse

BY JOSH OZERSKY

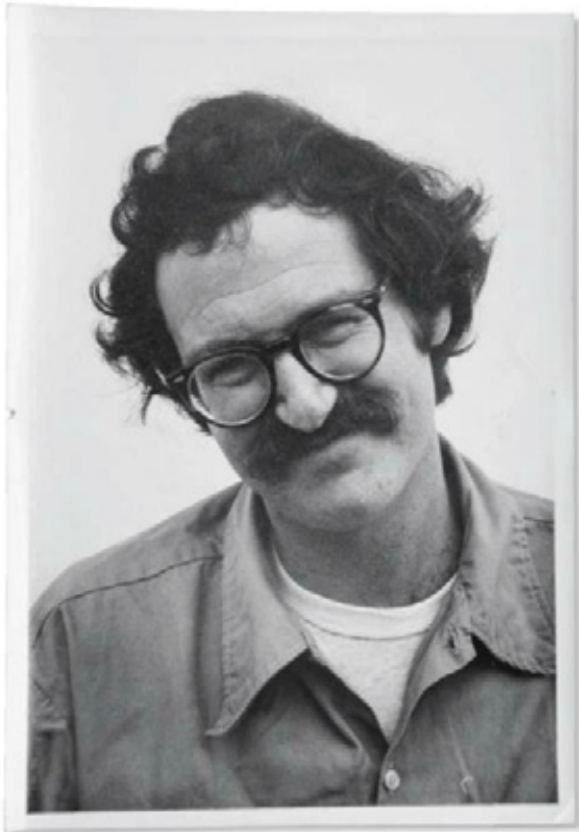
DAVID OZERSKY, MY FATHER, thought about food a lot. He wasn't frantic and feral about it like I was, but we shared a deep common feeling on the subject, one of our few such bonds. My father, a brilliant but melancholy man, loved to eat, but I believe he took more pleasure in talking about eating. He would talk about his last meal while eating the current one, and soon his talk would turn to the subject of where we ought to eat next.

In Atlantic City, our home during my teenage years, the options were gratifying but few: spareribs from a Chinese joint at the local strip mall, vast flaccid pies from a boardwalk pizzeria, some frozen rabbit meat from the ShopRite that he would roast up in the oven with honey and salt. My father never got tired of weighing each equally banal option, deliberating back and forth while never being completely sold on his decision.

I didn't register any of this as odd. In fact, the contours of my unformed mind molded to his strange monomania, a shape it has kept to this day. I didn't realize at the time that my father's preoccupation with food was a form of denial, something he talked about so as to avoid talking about—or thinking about—other things. But even as a child I could tell that he always seemed sad. It made me love him more, and feel guilty, and want to try to make him happy. At times, as I grew older, I was able to do that. Often it involved bringing him little surprises: mail-order Katz's salami, a half-eaten carton of Cantonese roast duck.

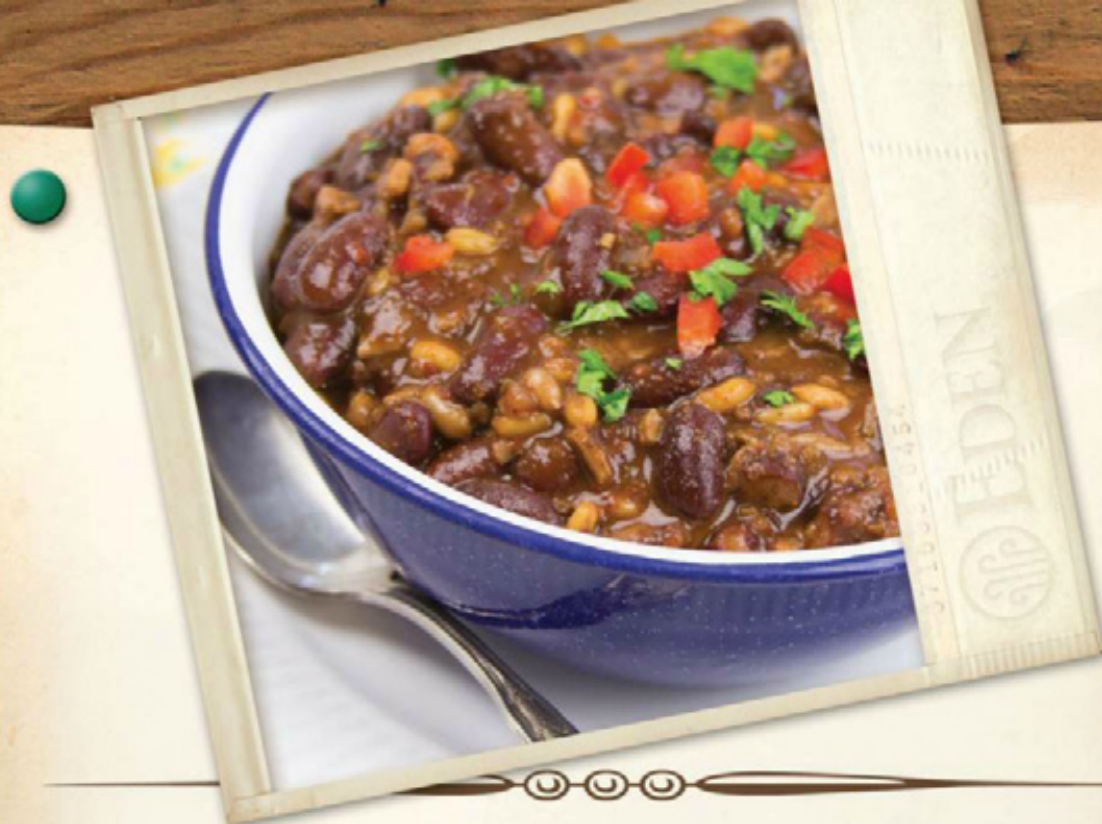
One of the reasons he was sad, I knew, was that he was a hugely talented painter, and nobody cared. My father was a failure; he knew it, and my mother and I knew it. We didn't blame him; it was understood as the kind of cosmic misfortune that requires stoicism and big sandwiches to bear up to. But it was tragic nonetheless.

My father's paintings of chefs, one of his favorite subjects, hung



From top: a 1993 painting by the author's father; a portrait of David Ozersky taken in the early 1970s.

COURTESY JOSH OZERSKY; PHOTOGRAPHED BY PENNY DE LOS SANTOS (2)



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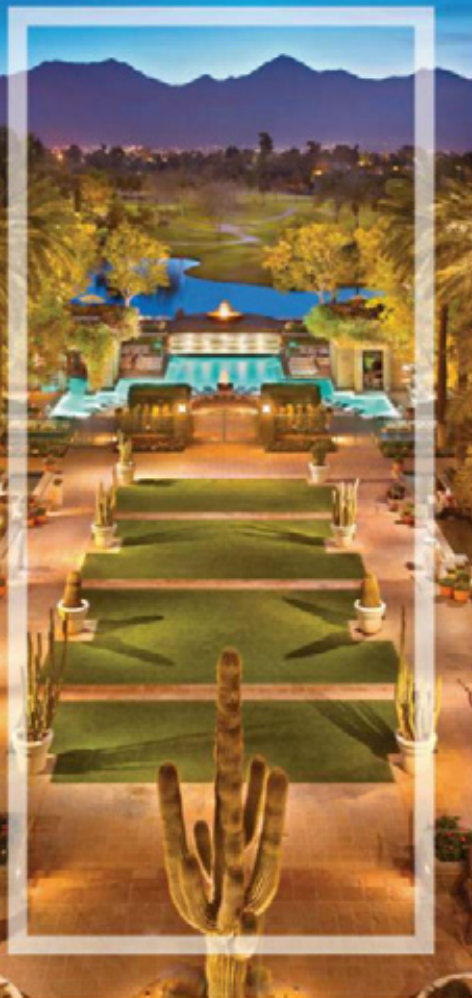
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in our house when I was growing up. They were much happier than his other paintings, whose themes included dead gangsters, the Holocaust, and junkies.

His paintings are charged with feeling, as per the ideals of abstract expressionism. I think he put so much of himself into them that, beyond their formal qualities, they seem to almost seethe with his thwarted, rueful spirit. He was completely unsparing in his painting, and I feel like it was the only place he ever really opened up. He never said anything to indicate it, because he never talked about himself, but I believe he thought of his whole life as the waste product of his art. Which made it so much worse that nobody cared about it. My father's active hopes for recognition as an artist died before I was born.

DAVID OZERSKY WASN'T a painter as far as anyone was concerned. He was a stagehand at Resorts International Hotel Casino in Atlantic City, a job he held for the last 20 years of his life. He had contempt for the job, which he considered mindless, but it was a cushy one, a union gig that allowed him to work three hours of an eight-hour shift and spend the other five across the street at a lounge inside the Burgundy Motor Inn. He was, I will say, inspired enough by his time at work to create a series of charcoal sketches of showgirls on acid-proof cardboard. "I'm going to go do my Edgar Degas routine," he would say mordantly, trudging up the stairs to the spare bedroom he used as his studio.

The one subject he kept coming back to in his paintings was food. It was a constant in our pre-Atlantic City days, back in the 1970s, when we lived in the groovy sun-dappled decadence of South Miami. That was before things turned really bad. I was five or six years old, and my father spent much of his time volunteering in the kitchen of a popular Italian restaurant called Raimondo's. His real job was working in his father's hardware store, which he hated but was obliged to do, because he was otherwise unemployable, for reasons I never thought to wonder about. During his time with Raimondo, he created elaborate menus and worked the line. That's when he first started painting chefs.

We went out to many restaurants back then, but my father cooked at home a lot as well. I remember him going through a soufflé phase, when he would make the fluffy

desserts every night, beating the eggs with a whisk furiously, and then pulling them at full height from the oven with a triumphant expression my mother and I otherwise almost never got to see.

The chef paintings stopped in 1978 when we moved to New Jersey and he landed the job at Resorts. Those were dismal times, with my mother—isolated, depressed—in even worse shape than my father. His closed-off sadness became even more airtight in 1982, when he came home from work one night to find my mother overdosed on Dilaudid, a potent prescription narcotic. I woke up; he told me to go back to sleep. I did. But when I got up in the morning, she was dead. We didn't talk about it.

We talked about food. For the next few days we talked animatedly about why some potato skins weren't crispy enough (they had too much potato still on them) and why Katz's pastrami was so great (it had to do with hand slicing). We began to eat more too. I remember cooking steaks on our porch, wood-fired

The one subject my father kept coming back to in his paintings was food. It was a constant in the early days—before things turned really bad

New York strips on a little hibachi, served up with buttered onion rolls. Afterward, we sat quietly in that nowhere, and then he said, sheepishly, "Maybe we should get some ribs from the Chinese place." Why not?

His mood eventually stabilized, but there remained a certain wry, morose quality to his eating. The summer I was 16, I manned the grill at Pizza Haven on the boardwalk. One day my father wandered up after a show at Resorts, dressed in black pants and a black long-sleeved shirt, his stage tech garb, killing time before heading to the Burgundy. I made him a double cheesesteak with pizza mozzarella melted into the vinegar peppers. He ate it absentmindedly, then stood around, trying to figure out what to do next. "Maybe I should have a sausage sandwich," he said, in a glum, half-questioning way. I wanted to cry, but I did make him a sausage sandwich, and he did like it.

His story isn't wholly a depressing one. In the early '90s he quit drinking and took up with someone who truly understood and loved him—someone who had known him most of his life. They began to spend a lot of time in New York. He had discovered Jean-

JOSH OZERSKY's most recent story for *SAVEUR* was "Breakfast of Champions, Vegas Style" (April 2012).



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White Pepper Ice Cream

MAKES ABOUT 1 QUART

This white pepper-infused dessert (pictured at left) is based on one served at Jean-Georges Vongerichten's Manhattan restaurant JoJo, where author Josh Ozersky's father, David, often dined in the 1990s. A creamy custard base is spiked with musky white peppercorns for an addictive balance of sweetness and heat.

- 1 1/4 cups milk
- 1 1/4 cups heavy cream
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 1/2 tsp. whole white peppercorns, lightly crushed
- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 6 egg yolks
- Roughly chopped tropical fruit, such as banana, kiwi, mango, and pineapple, for serving (optional)

1 Bring milk, heavy cream, half the sugar, plus peppercorns and salt to a boil in a 2-qt. saucepan over high heat. Reduce heat to medium; cook, whisking constantly, until sugar is completely dissolved, about 3 minutes. Remove from heat; cover and let mixture steep until infused with notes of peppery spice, about 15 minutes. Strain the mixture through a fine-mesh sieve, or a strainer lined with a double-thickness of cheesecloth, into a bowl; discard peppercorns. Wipe saucepan clean and return mixture to pan; bring to a gentle simmer over medium heat.

2 Whisk remaining sugar with egg yolks in a bowl until thick and smooth. While whisking constantly, slowly pour half of the hot milk mixture into the yolk mixture to temper the yolks and keep them from curdling. Stir tempered yolk mixture into remaining milk mixture in saucepan. Cook, stirring constantly, until mixture thickens to a custard-like consistency and coats the back of a wooden spoon, about 20 minutes. Transfer custard to a bowl and cover with plastic wrap, pressing it directly against the surface of the custard to keep a skin from forming. Chill custard completely.

3 Pour chilled custard into an ice cream maker and process according to the manufacturer's instructions until custard is churned and thick. Transfer ice cream to an airtight storage container; freeze until completely set, at least 4 hours. Using an ice cream scoop, divide ice cream between serving bowls. Top with a mixture of sliced tropical fruit, such as banana, kiwi, mango, and pineapple, if you like.

Georges Vongerichten when the French chef was still at the Lafayette Restaurant at the Drake Hotel. And when he opened JoJo on the Upper East Side in 1991, my father became such a loyalist that the chef would try things out on him. One Christmas, Vongerichten even presented him with a foie gras terrine, a mark of special favor. My father was astonished by the chef's conviction as an artist, and I think it reawakened something in

I tried to make him happy, bringing him little surprises: mail-order Katz's salami, some Cantonese roast duck

him. ("Who else would have come up with white pepper ice cream?" he'd ask me, rhetorically, over and over again.) He became aware of his torpor; he felt guilty about it, and was moved to start a second series of chefs, many of whom looked suspiciously like Jean-Georges.

When the chef's big luxe restaurant in the Trump Tower received a four-star review in the *New York Times* from Ruth Reichl in 1997, my father had it silk-screened onto

shower curtains, which he then painted over in a Warholian manner, the only time I ever saw him depart from his figurative, emotional style. I think he was grateful that the chef had made him so happy in the only way he allowed himself to be happy, and helped him, in some small way, to start painting again. Nobody saw or cared about the paintings, then as before; but he opened up a little in middle age and would occasionally say revealing things in his own sardonic way, like "I beat three major addictions in my life, but I can't stop buying cheap shoes." He would mock his own dark cast of mind, saying his motto was "Let them get you down." But when he said it I knew it was no longer completely true, and that made me feel good. David Ozersky died in 1998 at 58 from a cancer that had been diagnosed four days earlier. He never saw it coming. He thought he had a backache. He was going to chiropractors. When I got back from the hospital—on Father's Day, no less—there were still some leftover pork chops in the refrigerator from the Malaysian restaurant Penang on the Upper West Side, which, it turned out, had been his last meal. I finished them, of course; there was never any chance I wouldn't. 🐷



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CLASSIC



Piped Dreams

Conquering the French potato dish *pommes duchesse*

BY SOPHIE BRICKMAN

AHAB HAD HIS WHITE whale. I had my *pommes duchesse*.

Hunched over a pastry bag in my Manhattan kitchen, my wrist cocked at a bizarre angle, I was about to give up on the classic French potato dish. Allegedly, it's simple to prepare: I'd roasted russet potatoes until they were tender, passed them through a ricer, and enriched the mash with egg yolks, butter, and a sprinkling of nutmeg. Now all I had to do was pipe the potatoes onto a sheet tray in the form of rosettes and bake them until golden brown.

The problem was in the piping. I wanted each swirl of *pommes duchesse* to resemble the grand, spiraling domes of St. Basil's Cathedral. Instead, I got a sad worm. Next, a button. On my third try, I hit an air bubble and the bag emitted a sound not suitable for sophisticated company.

When I was in culinary school, we'd devoted a full unit to the *légume de résistance* of the French table. I learned not only how to mash the potato, but how to transform it into *pommes Anna*, the slices layered and

crisped in clarified butter, and luxurious *gratin dauphinois*, rounds smothered in cream and bubbling cheese. I even once successfully made *pommes soufflés*, technique-heavy, twice-fried chips that balloon into airy puffs when executed correctly. But one preparation, *pommes duchesse*, still remained out of my reach.

It was a signal of haute cuisine, the hottest potato accompaniment of the 1960s and '70s, spanning the globe and gracing everything from plates of chateaubriand in New York steakhouses to the scallop shells of Paris atop coquilles St-Jacques. I knew that if I really wanted to master the French potato canon, I had to nail *pommes duchesse*.

So like any good procrastinator, I took a break and hit the library. How had my nemesis come to be a Gallic cooking class requisite anyway? Before the fall of the Bastille, I learned, the monarchy wasn't the only entity in need of a public relations overhaul: Potatoes weren't doing so hot either. Though the South American tubers had landed in Europe a century prior, the French were so suspicious

It was a signal of haute cuisine, the hottest potato accompaniment of the 1960s and '70s

of potatoes that in 1748 the government issued a decree forbidding anyone to grow them; rumor had it they caused leprosy, *sacrébleu!*

Potato recipes didn't appear in cookbooks until Antoine-Auguste Parmentier, a former army pharmacist who had survived on little else while in captivity in Prussia during the Seven Years' War, made a *pommes de terre* public relations push as famine descended on 18th-century France. In 1817 a recipe for *pommes duchesse* finally appeared in a French cookbook, *La Nouvelle Cuisinière Bourgeoise*. Though a handful of people have tried to identify the aristocrat who lent her title to the dish, chances are there was no tuber-enamored duchess. In an effort to scrub potatoes of their bad reputation, 19th-century chefs created and named potato dishes generously, and "à la duchesse" ascribed a grandness to potatoes: This was an elevated tater, worthy of a royal.

I discovered that, for years, *pommes duchesse*

1 To pipe a perfect rosette, use a pastry bag fitted with a 3/4" star tip and squeeze a tight 2 1/2" round to make a solid foundation.



2 Use constant pressure to compress the potato mixture into one corner of bag, and continue piping a tight spiral, building a cone-shaped mound.



3 Once you reach the top of the mound, slowly release pressure on the piping bag while lifting straight up to give the rosette a slightly pointed tip.



INGALLS PHOTOGRAPHY; ILLUSTRATIONS: BRUNDA WEAVER

referred primarily to croquettes—neat cylinders of puréed potatoes breaded and fried until crispy, no piping required. At the turn of the 20th century, Auguste Escoffier called for the potato mixture to be piped out as a border for cod gratin but not specifically as rosettes. And as late as the 1960s, Julia Child allowed for *pommes duchesse* to be shaped with a fork or spoon, though she warned that “they look far more stylish when squeezed through a pastry bag.”

I wanted *pommes duchesse* with style, so I got on the phone with Jean François Bruel, executive chef at Manhattan’s Daniel, one of the few restaurants that still serves the old-school side dish, to get a few tips on piping. It turns out that the technique dates back to 13th-century B.C. Mesopotamia; by the Middle Ages, it had traveled to Europe, where cooks piped forcemeat into pig stomachs and decorated them with slivered almonds to form elaborate, edible hedgehogs. If chefs of yore could pipe out spiny mammals, I figured my white whale was within reach.

According to Bruel, piping was simple: He told me to smooch the riced potato mixture to one corner of the bag, compressing it to squeeze out any air bubbles. Then, holding

it at an 80-degree angle, I was to exert slow, steady pressure from the top with one hand while guiding the flow of the mixture with the other. Once I learned the movement, there was structural integrity to consider. I had to build each rosette in tight concentric circles, leaving no hollow space inside, or the form I’d worked so hard to master would collapse in the oven.

I gave it another shot. My sheet tray looked a bit like an Evolution of Man chart, rendered in *pommes purée*. With each try, my potatoes rose further off their haunches until the last ones stood tall and handsome. After a brush of egg yolk and cream to ensure golden brown tops after baking, I slid them into the oven and waited.

Forty-five minutes later, the comforting smell of buttery potatoes hanging in the air, I assessed my work. Each *pommes duchesse* looked majestic, even the slightly deflated ones. I took a bite. A crunchy exterior gave way to a fluffy inside, with just a hint of warm baking spice from the nutmeg, like an über-dignified tater tot. After I’d polished off my third perfect swirl, I sat at my kitchen table smug, happy, and full—an Ahab no more. 🐙

✶ Pommes Duchesse

(French Piped Potatoes)

SERVES 4

These elegant potatoes (pictured on page 50) are brushed with an egg wash before baking for color and crunch.

- 2 ½ lb. russet potatoes (about 4)
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened
- 2 egg yolks, plus 1 egg mixed with 1 tsp. heavy cream, lightly beaten
- ¼ tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1 Heat oven to 400°. Using a fork, prick potatoes all over; place on a baking sheet. Bake until tender, 1 ½ hours; let cool, then peel and pass through a food mill or ricer.

2 Mix potatoes, butter, yolks, nutmeg, salt, and pepper in a bowl; transfer to a piping bag fitted with a ¾" star tip. On a parchment paper-lined baking sheet, and working in a tight circular motion, pipe twelve 2 ½" cones about 2" high (see bottom of page 50). Brush with egg mixture; bake until golden brown, 40–45 minutes.

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State of Grace

Midwestern classics and a chef's sensibility come together
on the holiday table

BY MARY SUE MILLIKEN PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARIANA LINDQUIST





The tree-lined driveway leading up to the home of Barbara Willis, the author's mother-in-law, in Neodesha, Kansas. Facing page, clockwise from left: fall salad with roasted butternut squash, kale chips, and pomegranate seeds; pear and ginger pie with streusel topping; Josh Schweitzer, the author's husband, slicing bread. Preceding pages: dishes for the author's Thanksgiving meal. Recipes begin on page 61.

MY MOTHER-IN-LAW Barbara fell in love with Bill "Willie" Willis, an oil and gas wildcatter with a twinkle in his eye, in Kansas back in the late 1970s. Although we lost Bill a few years back, he taught her all his drilling secrets. At 83, Barbara continues to manage her leases—and even strikes black gold now and then—from her gorgeous farmhouse in Neodesha in southeast Kansas. It's remote and rural: the ideal setting for a fall feast. My husband Josh and I head there every Thanksgiving.

My family lives in Los Angeles, where I run my Border Grill restaurants and Josh works as an architect, but we both grew up in the Midwest and love these annual visits to our home turf. This year, accompanied by our son Kieran, 15, we stuff our suitcases with treasured ingredients for the holiday meal—a knob of horseradish for making bloody marys, fresh chestnuts that we'll roast and simmer with onions in cream for a decadent side dish, and loaves of Josh's fresh, crusty levain for celery-root stuffing. Everyone in my family knows the drill: full suitcase on the outbound flight and, unless I find something irresistibly delicious to bring home, half empty on the return.

In Kansas City, our oldest son Declan, 23, is waiting at the airport, fresh off the plane from New York. We meet up with my sister-in-

law Gabrielle—whom we call Gabe—and her kids Max and Molly, who all live in Kansas City, then swing by the supermarket for a massive three-carts-full shopping expedition. At Barbara's house, we'll be joined by my sister Chris and her husband Dick who will drive down from Omaha, so I'm doing the math to make sure we've got plenty of food and I won't have to worry about grocery shopping again for the rest of the week.

Once both cars are packed to the rafters, we head south until, three-plus hours later, we pull off onto gravel road Number 325, and I feel a stir of excitement as Barbara's long tree-lined driveway comes into view. The towering cedars flanking the approach to the house were planted by Josh a year before we met; today, nearly three decades later, it's fun to see his grand vision realized. There are cows on the right, wheat fields on the left, and I can't wait to get inside, unpack, and unwind. Barbara's Great Danes meet us outside, providing a barking escort, and horses peek out of the barn at the hubbub. It's nearly sunset and Barbara's at the kitchen window; we pile into the house, give hugs all around, unpack our groceries, and start getting reacquainted with the farm.

The weather is warm and dry, and the kids romp around the ranch with the dogs, fish for bass in Barbara's pond, and shoot BB guns at pop cans. Once I settle in, I don't leave the farm until it's time to fly home, sending everyone else to pick up things we've forgotten, take the kids for their yearly Sonic burger and Dairy Queen fix, and grab a few bottles from the local wine shop. When I'm not gazing at the meadow



crisscrossed by railroad tie fences, I hike around the farm or curl up to read in an armchair. Most of all, I revel in the luxury of taking a whole week to do my favorite thing in the world: cook for my family.

From the moment we arrive, I am in meal-planning mode. As the week progresses, with lots of help from Gabe and Chris, I tick off all the do-ahead tasks for the monumental cook-a-thon to come—washing and peeling vegetables and tearing bread for stuffing. Barbara joins us in the kitchen to share stories and soak up our company; while she enjoys living alone, it's clear she also loves the frenetic energy and bustle the holidays bring to her house. In turn, we love the quiet farm, the surrounding woods, and the long, leisurely days filled with cooking, napping, laughing, and eating—the perfect counterpoint to our hectic lives back in Los Angeles.

YEARS AGO, WHEN I WAS FIRST getting to know my husband's family, I started jumping in to help Barbara and Gabe cook all their traditional Thanksgiving dishes, including a gargantuan turkey. Meanwhile, Josh would help Granny, Barbara's mother, with the pies. Year by year I've added more of my food to the mix—my mother's sweet and sour cabbage one year, a celery-root stuffing the next—and when Granny passed, Josh became our pie man. These days we've taken over the cooking. But while my husband and I steer, everyone else pulls their weight.

On the day before Thanksgiving, Gabe, Chris, and I are up and in

Our Thanksgiving menu is enormous. It morphs slightly from year to year, but it's always a balance of old and new, a mix of whatever ideas or ingredients I'm exploring at the moment, as well as the beloved family standards

the kitchen early to start on the dozen side dishes on our to-do list. Our Thanksgiving menu is enormous. It morphs slightly from year to year, but it's always a balance of old and new, a mix of whatever ideas or ingredients I'm exploring at the moment, as well as the beloved family standards. Since none of us can ever imagine omitting one of our personal favorites, we tend to make everything.

We always serve another kind of poultry alongside the turkey, so Josh and the kids spend Wednesday morning readying pheasants and partridges they've picked up from a local farmer. Our dueling birds

MARY SUE MILLIKEN is co-chef and co-owner of Los Angeles' Border Grill restaurants and Truck. Her last article for *SAVEUR* was "Lemon Soufflé" (October 2012).



Clockwise from top: the author (right) and her sister-in-law Gabrielle Kaniger; roasted onion and chestnut compote; the author's oldest son Declan with partridges. Facing page: roast turkey with celery-root stuffing. Recipes begin on page 61.







Clockwise from left: tomato pudding (front), sweet noodle kugel (middle), and roasted onion and chestnut compote (back); the author's nephew Max Kaniger and son Declan Schweitzer pluck game birds; sweet and sour cabbage. Facing page: The author's family sits down to Thanksgiving dinner. Recipes begin on page 61.

tradition started one year when we arrived to find Willie had mail-ordered a giant pot and burner, along with a syringe for injecting garlic and Tabasco into the turkey. My in-laws hadn't been able to resist the deep-fried turkey craze. It wasn't bad, but it didn't stick—and I'm glad we tried it, because ever since, we've prepared a traditional roast turkey and something experimental alongside. One year it was a barbecued turkey. Another time we added a spicy braised chicken. For the past few years, it's been game birds, cooked in red wine. This year I'm planning to braise them in hard cider for a Kansan take on coq au vin.

The birds hang by their feet in the barn overnight—a scene from an 18th-century still life—and then the kids pluck them. (In LA, we raise our own chickens, so the task isn't that unfamiliar.) They bring the rather scrawny naked carcasses into the kitchen for me to gut and braise. Along with that hard cider, I add parsnips, pigs' feet, and pancetta. Cooked on the bone, the little lean birds become rich in flavor, unctuous but not fatty.

We make a compote of roasted onions and chestnuts simmered with bacon in cognac and cream that's based on a dish I learned 30 years ago working at Le Perroquet in Chicago. Back at the restaurant, we served it with suckling pig, but it goes just as well with turkey. Here in Barbara's kitchen, we score whole chestnuts, soak them a few hours, then roast them in her fireplace and peel them. Doing this by hand is painstaking, but it's worth it—the nuts are deliciously roasted, and besides, we all share the work, laughing and telling stories as we go.

When Chris and I were young, our mom's German heritage dictated red cabbage for holiday meals, so we make that too: I shred the cabbage, toss it with sugar, red wine vinegar, and caraway seeds, and sauté it with the duck fat I've brought from LA. Both at home and in my restaurants, I save flavorful fats—whether skimmed from chicken stock or rendered from a roasted or braised duck—and keep them in airtight containers in the freezer for these kinds of occasions. Stirring the cabbage, I marvel at the color changing from dark purplish black to almost lilac as the vinegar works its magic. And as good as I know this balanced sweet-tart dish will be paired with the richer sides, I look forward even more to having it on my ritual day-after-Thanksgiving sandwich on toasted bread with mayonnaise, turkey, and lettuce.

Our prep work continues late into the evening. Gabe mashes canned yams and tops them with a fleet of marshmallows for her sweet potato casserole. We pickle shallots that we'll sauté with green beans, and we blitz together ground walnuts, cranberry, and orange for a relish. I dry-rub the turkey—a 12-pounder, juicier and more tender than a larger bird—and make stock for the giblet gravy. And at the very end of the day, we all gather in the kitchen for a glass of wine while I dice celery root for tomorrow's stuffing and Josh comes in to mix dough for the next day's pies. Had he not become such an amazing architect, he would have made a fine chef. When we finally get too punchy, we head off to bed. Even as I fall asleep I am silently reviewing what's still left to be done.



ON THANKSGIVING DAY, I GET UP at sunrise to stuff the turkey. I pull the bird out of the fridge to start warming to room temperature, and as I boil water for my tea, I see Barbara, always the early riser, out in the barn feeding the horses. I head to the basement for my favorite appliance in the whole house: an ancient electric roaster. I breathe a quick prayer that it still works as I set it up out of the way in the pantry and hit the “on” switch. The orange light glows and I hear the creaking of metal heating up. I relax—a little. With the side dishes and pies competing for oven space, that roaster is essential; it keeps the bird super moist while crisping the skin beautifully. While I stuff the turkey, Barbara and I chat quietly before the rest of the family rises.

The turkey attended to, I pull out all the dishes we made the day before and set them on the counter so they’ll be room temperature before we reheat them. Gabe and I break out the yellowing recipe cards marked with Barbara’s loopy handwriting and find the one that holds the instructions for making “noodle ring,” a Midwestern take on noodle kugel with egg noodles, cottage cheese, and lots of brown sugar and butter topped with cornflakes that we’ll bake into a sweet casserole.

Meanwhile, Josh is rolling out dough. He makes five pies—pumpkin, pecan, gooseberry, apple cranberry, and pear ginger—for the same reason we make so many side dishes. Certain parties have to have their pumpkin and pecan, and I have a soft spot for the fruit

Everyone pitches in. To my surprise, the entire family seems to enjoy being bossed around as if they were line cooks. The sizzle of the turkey and the scent of roast bird fill the air

pies. They’re in and out of the oven by eleven, and all that’s left to do is toss the salad of crispy baked kale and roasted butternut squash with pomegranate seeds, pepitas (pumpkin seeds), and lots of crunchy endive and arugula—a fresh contrast to all the belly-filling dishes.

Everyone pitches in. To my eternal surprise, the entire family seems to enjoy being bossed around as if they were line cooks at Border Grill. The constant sizzle of the turkey and the scent of roast bird fill the air, reminding us that we skipped breakfast.

Around noon, as everyone begins to congregate, I break out the crudités, which my mom always served before a big meal (it’s the best time to get your kids to eat their vegetables—right before dinner, when they’re ravenous), and I serve a round of bloody marys, a version of a drink on the menu at Border Grill. We’ve made the ice cubes from cucumber, jalapeño, and tomatillo juice so the drinks will change and mellow, but not become watery, as they melt. The



One look at my plate and I am aware of the season: fall yielding to winter, the snappy autumnal flavors of the pomegranate, escarole, and kale combining with the comforting wintery parsnips

hard-boiled quail's-egg garnish, as well as the chopped crispy bacon in the celery salt on the rim of the glass, makes the drink a hybrid cocktail and appetizer. (I jokingly call it an "apptail," which we all agree sounds better than "cockitizer.")

As mealtime approaches, I play musical casseroles, reheating all our side dishes in the oven while sautéing the beans. I take out the turkey, and make a quick pan gravy with the stock from the day before. Once the turkey has rested, I begin to carve as everyone brings dishes to the sideboard. I urge Barbara to start filling her plate and take her seat at the head of the table.

Though I grab just a tablespoonful of each dish, my plate is overflowing when I sit down to eat. I can tell Barbara, a light eater, is happy—she has a full plate too. Gabe makes an eloquent toast to family and being together, with a hearty thanks to everyone for com-

ing to this remote haven.

Even though it's warm outside, one look at my plate and I am aware of the season: fall soon yielding to winter. I love how the snappy autumnal flavors of the pomegranate, escarole, and the baked kale in the salad combine with the comforting wintery foods like parsnips, celeriac, and chestnuts, the roasted turkey and the gently braised birds. The mashed potatoes, enriched with butter and crème fraîche, are balanced by the crisp bite of the sautéed pickled shallots and green beans and the perfectly sweet and sour red cabbage. And, just like every year, I try the noodle kugel. It's been growing on me, I'll admit, especially when I pair it with the tangy cranberry relish.

We all go back for seconds of our favorites; some of us have thirds. Despite our gluttony, I'm happy to see we'll still have plenty of delicious leftovers for the next several days. As the Thanksgiving meal winds down, we are flushed with wine and good food.

The kids do all the dinner dishes, teasing each other and snapping towels. My sister's husband Dick and my son Declan play guitar and we sing our favorite Simon and Garfunkel songs. We put on the traditional late afternoon James Bond movie (*Casino Royale* this year) and as I watch, my eyes slip closed. We're not done with the meal—there's homemade eggnog and our many pies still to come—but for now I just bask in the feast's afterglow, and look forward to our last few days of rest, relaxation, and leftovers. 🍷



Clockwise from left: sautéed green beans with fried pickled shallots (see page 63 for recipe); Border Grill bloody marys with a garnish of hard-boiled quail's eggs, bacon salt, and celery (see recipe below); a horse grazing outside of Barbara Willis' home. Facing page: Gabrielle Kaniger, the author's sister-in-law, in the kitchen of Willis' home in Kansas.

Border Grill Bloody Mary SERVES 8

Spicy tomatillo and cucumber ice cubes chill this twist on the classic brunch drink (pictured above). The recipe comes from author Mary Sue Milliken's Los Angeles restaurant Border Grill.

For the ice cubes:

- 8 tomatillos, peeled and stemmed
- 2 large cucumbers, sliced
- 2 large jalapeños, stemmed

For the drink:

- 8 cups tomato juice
- 1/4 cup fresh lime juice, plus wedges for rimming glasses
- 2 tbsp. freshly grated horseradish
- 2 tsp. hot sauce, preferably Tabasco, plus more to taste
- 2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp. ground celery seed
- Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1/4 cup celery salt, for glasses
- 4 slices bacon, cooked until crisp and finely chopped
- 2 cups gin or vodka (optional)
- Celery stalks and hard-boiled

quail's eggs (optional), peeled, for garnish

1 Make the ice cubes: Purée tomatillos, cucumbers, and jalapeños in a blender until smooth. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve into a measuring cup. Pour into ice cube trays and freeze.

2 Make the drink: Stir tomato juice, lime juice, horseradish, hot sauce, Worcestershire, celery seed, salt, and pepper in a large glass pitcher. To serve, mix celery salt and bacon on a plate. Rub lime wedges around rims of 8 glasses and dip in bacon mixture. Place 4 tomatillo ice cubes in each glass and pour bloody mary mixture over. Top each glass with 2 oz. gin or vodka and garnish with celery stalk and a quail's egg, if you like. Add more hot sauce, to taste.

Cranberry-Walnut Relish MAKES ABOUT 2 1/2 CUPS

Raw cranberries and earthy walnuts are transformed into a tart, fresh condiment for turkey in this recipe (pictured on page 52).

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup walnut halves, lightly toasted

- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 12-oz. bag fresh cranberries
- 1 large orange, zested, then peeled and thinly sliced, seeds removed

Pulse all ingredients in a food processor until almost smooth; chill until ready to serve.

Crème Fraîche Mashed Potatoes SERVES 8

Mashed potatoes combined with butter and crème fraîche make a rich, creamy side (pictured on page 52). Any root vegetable, such as parsnips or turnips, can be used in combination with or in place of the potatoes.

- 3 lb. Yukon gold potatoes, peeled and quartered
- 1 cup crème fraîche
- 8 tbsp. unsalted butter
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Boil potatoes in a 6-qt. saucepan of salted water until very tender, about 20 minutes. Drain potatoes and mash with a potato masher, or pass through a food mill or a ricer into a bowl. Bring crème fraîche and butter to a simmer

in a 2-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Pour over potatoes and add salt and pepper; stir to combine.

Fall Salad with Roasted Butternut Squash, Kale Chips, and Pomegranate Seeds SERVES 8-10

Crispy baked kale, sweet roasted squash, and peppery arugula and watercress are combined with pumpkin and pomegranate seeds in this colorful salad (pictured on page 55).

- 1/2 medium butternut squash (about 1 lb.), peeled, seeded, and thinly sliced
- 1 1/4 cups olive oil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 large bunch kale, ribs removed and leaves torn into 2" pieces
- 1/2 tsp. citric acid (see page 104)
- 4 cups arugula
- 2 cups watercress
- 1 small head escarole, leaves torn into pieces and washed
- 1/2 cup pumpkin seeds, lightly toasted
- 1/2 cup pomegranate seeds

- 1/3 cup grated pecorino romano
- 2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 2 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 2 tsp. maple syrup

1 Heat oven to 400°. Toss squash with 1/4 cup oil, plus salt and pepper on a baking sheet; spread into an even layer. Bake until slightly caramelized, 18–20 minutes; let cool.

2 Reduce oven to 275°. Toss kale with 1/4 cup oil, citric acid, salt, and pepper on a baking sheet; spread into an even layer. Bake until crisp, 25–30 minutes; let cool.

3 Whisk remaining oil with pecorino romano, lemon juice, Dijon, maple syrup, salt, and pepper in a bowl until smooth. Toss arugula, watercress, escarole, and 1/2 of dressing in a bowl; transfer to a serving platter and sprinkle with squash, kale, pumpkin seeds, and pomegranate seeds. Serve additional dressing on the side.

Pear and Ginger Pie with Streusel Topping

SERVES 8

Fresh ginger gives the filling of this pear pie (pictured on page 55) a warming kick of spice, balanced by the buttery crumble of sweet streusel.

For the crust:

- 1 1/3 cups flour
- 1/3 cup cornstarch
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter, cubed and chilled
- 1/4 cup, plus 1 tbsp. lard or vegetable shortening, chilled
- 1 tbsp. sugar
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 cup ice-cold water

For the filling and topping:

- 8 medium Bartlett pears, peeled, cored, and thinly sliced
- 3 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 tbsp. minute tapioca (see page 104)
- 5 tbsp. butter
- 1/2 tsp. ground mace
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/4 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- 1 1"-piece ginger, peeled and grated
- 1 cup flour

1 Make the crust: Pulse flour, cornstarch, butter, lard, sugar, and salt in a food processor into pea-size crumbs. Add water; pulse until dough comes together. Form dough into a disk and wrap in plastic wrap; chill 1 hour.

2 Heat oven to 450°. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into a 12" round. Fit into a 9" pie plate. Trim edges and crimp; chill 30 minutes. Using a fork, prick dough all over. Line dough with parchment paper and fill with pie weights or dried beans; bake 15 minutes. Remove paper and weights; let cool.

3 Make the filling and topping: Toss pears with lemon juice; let sit, uncovered, 30 minutes, then drain, discarding liquid. Stir in 1/2 cup sugar, plus tapioca. For the topping, stir remaining sugar, plus butter, mace, salt, nutmeg, and ginger in a bowl. Using your fingers, mix in flour until small crumbs form; set both filling and topping aside.

4 Reduce oven to 375°. Tightly arrange pears over dough and sprinkle with topping; bake until the topping is golden and filling is bubbling, about 1 hour. Let pie cool to room temperature before serving.

Reinforced Turkey Stock

MAKES ABOUT 5 CUPS

Simmering wings and giblets in turkey stock packs it full of flavor, making a deep, rich base for a pan gravy (see recipe at right).

- 2 lb. turkey wings
- 8 cups turkey or chicken stock
- 1 large yellow onion, quartered
- 6 sprigs thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 medium carrots, roughly chopped
- 2 stalks celery, roughly chopped
- 1 tsp. whole black peppercorns
- Giblets from 1 turkey (gizzard, heart, and neck; save liver for another use)

Simmer all ingredients in an 8-qt. saucepan until vegetables are very soft, about 1 1/2 hours. Strain stock, discarding solids but reserving giblets; let cool and, if necessary, skim fat. Roughly chop gizzards and heart and shred meat from neck; chill giblets until ready to make gravy.

Roast Turkey with Celery-Root Stuffing and Giblet Gravy

SERVES 12–14

Celery root brings an earthy dimension to the stuffing for this crisp-skinned bird (pictured on page 57), which is dressed in a white wine, giblet, and mushroom gravy.

For the turkey and stuffing:

- 1 12–14-lb. turkey (giblets reserved for making stock; see

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Born a racer.

Reinforced Turkey Stock recipe at left; optional)

- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 2 tbsp. kosher salt, plus more to taste
- 2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper, plus more to taste
- 1 1/2 cups unsalted butter
- 2 large onions, roughly chopped
- 1 bunch celery, trimmed and roughly chopped
- 1/2 lb. white mushrooms, quartered
- 1 large celery root, peeled and roughly chopped
- 2 1/2 cups turkey or chicken stock
- 1 cup roughly chopped parsley
- 1/4 cup roughly chopped sage
- 2 1-lb. loaves stale country bread, cut into 1/2" pieces

For the gravy:

- 1 cup white wine
- 1 recipe Reinforced Turkey Stock (see recipe at left), or 5 cups turkey or chicken stock
- 6 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1/2 lb. white button mushrooms, quartered
- 2 shallots, roughly chopped
- 1/4 cup flour
- 3 tbsp. heavy cream

- 2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1 Make the turkey and stuffing: Heat oven to 425°. Pat turkey dry with paper towels. Mix oil, salt, and pepper in a bowl; rub all over turkey inside and out. Place turkey breast side up on a roasting pan fitted with a rack; chill, uncovered, overnight.

2 Melt 10 tbsp. butter in an 8-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Add onions and celery; cook, stirring occasionally, until soft, 8-10 minutes. Add mushrooms and celery root; cook until soft, 12-15 minutes. Stir in 1 1/2 cups stock, parsley, sage, salt, and pepper; bring to a boil. Remove from heat and stir in bread; let cool slightly.

3 Place half the stuffing inside turkey; place remaining stuffing in a baking dish and dot with 3 tbsp. butter. Melt remaining butter; brush all over turkey, and pour remaining stock into pan. Roast for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 350°; continue to roast, basting turkey every 30 minutes, until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thighs reads 165°, about 3 hours. Transfer turkey to a cutting board; let sit 15 minutes before carving.

ing. Pour pan drippings into a bowl; set aside. Meanwhile, place dish of stuffing in oven and bake until golden brown on top, about 30 minutes.

4 Make the gravy: Place roasting pan on stove top; heat over medium heat. Add wine; cook, scraping up browned bits from bottom of pan, until reduced by half, about 4 minutes. Add reinforced stock; bring to a boil and then pour into a bowl. Melt butter in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms and shallots; cook, stirring occasionally, until golden, 10-12 minutes. Add reserved pan drippings and flour; cook until slightly thick, about 8 minutes. Stir in reserved chopped giblets from turkey stock (if using), plus cream, lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Carve the turkey; serve with stuffing and gravy.

Roasted Onion and Chestnut Compote

SERVES 6-8

Roasted onions and chestnuts are simmered in cream with cognac in this adaptation of a dish from chef Mary Sue Milliken (pictured on page 56).

- 2 lb. small white and red onions, such as cipolline or pearl,

unpeeled, trimmed

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

- 4 oz. thick-cut bacon, cut into 1/4" strips

- 1/2 cup brandy or cognac
- 1 lb. fresh chestnuts, peeled and quartered, or one 15-oz. jar whole roasted chestnuts, drained (see page 104)

- 1 1/2 cups heavy cream

1 Heat oven to 350°. Toss onions in oil, salt, and pepper on a baking sheet; spread into an even layer. Bake, stirring occasionally, until tender and browned, 30-40 minutes; let cool, then peel.

2 Heat bacon in a 12" skillet; cook, stirring occasionally, until crisp, 8-10 minutes. Pour fat from pan and save for future use. Pull pan off heat and add brandy; return to heat and carefully ignite with a match. Cook until flame subsides, about 1 minute. Add onions, chestnuts, cream, salt, and pepper; simmer until cream is reduced by half, 12-15 minutes.

Sautéed Green Beans with Pickled Shallots

SERVES 6-8



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BALANCING ACTS

When planning a Thanksgiving menu, one of the first things I think about as a chef is how to get as much variety as possible on the table. At my family's Thanksgiving, this happens through sheer volume, but even three-dish menus can be filled with complementary flavors. Turkey is a wonderfully versatile bird that lends itself to a range of treatments. And with sides, the sky's the limit. Here are four of my favorite holiday combinations. (For recipes, see SAVEUR.COM/THANKSGIVING.) —Mary Sue Milliken



One of the most popular dishes at the Border Grill translates well to the holiday table: **grilled turkey breast with caramelized onion, cracked black pepper, and vinegar**. These slices of turkey breast, draped in a butter-vinegar sauce, are great with **shredded, sautéed Brussels sprouts**. Balance the plate with **mashed red yams** mixed with lime, honey, and crème fraîche.



Braised turkey in green mole adds intriguing flavors to the table. The mole of toasted pumpkin seeds, oregano, cilantro, and tomatillos has layered autumnal notes that are perfect for this time of year. Pair it with **red rice** for soaking up the mole sauce, and tender **cumin roasted carrots and parsnips** which round out the meal with root-vegetable sweetness.



This vibrantly colored, vividly spiced **red roasted turkey** is marinated in orange juice, achiote, and garlic, a recipe from the Yucatan; an orange stuffed in the cavity also permeates the bird with a citrus scent. I like to serve this with earthy **refried black beans** and a spicy toasted **jalapeño cornbread dressing** for a Mexican take on the holiday.



Dessert is another opportunity to get a lot of variety on the table. **Pumpkin cheesecake tarts** are a delicious riff on pumpkin pie, their gingersnap crusts packed with warming spices. Serve them with egg-rich **crêpes Cajeta** filled with homemade caramel, and buttery, salty-sweet **Border Grill sugar cookies** loaded with pecans and potato chips.

Shallots are quick-pickled and sautéed with green beans in this refreshing side (pictured on page 61).

- 4 large shallots, sliced 1/4" thick
- 1 cup red wine vinegar
- 2 tbsp. kosher salt, plus more to taste
- 2 tbsp. sugar
- 1 tsp. coarsely ground black pepper, plus more to taste
- 5 bay leaves
- 5 sprigs thyme
- 2 lb. green beans, trimmed and cut into 2" pieces
- 3 tbsp. olive oil
- 3 tbsp. unsalted butter

1 Place shallots in a bowl. Bring vinegar, salt, sugar, pepper, bay leaves, thyme, and 1 cup water to a boil in a 2-qt. saucepan; pour over shallots and let sit 1 hour, then drain, reserving 1/4 cup pickling liquid.

2 Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add beans; cook until crisp-tender, 5-7 minutes, and drain. Heat oil and butter in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Add shallots, beans, salt, and pepper; cook until golden, 3-5 minutes. Stir in reserved pickling liquid.

Sweet Noodle Kugel

SERVES 8

Kugel (pictured on page 58)—the creamy egg noodle casserole that's a staple of Jewish holiday cooking—gets a Midwestern topping of cornflakes in this Thanksgiving side dish.

- Kosher salt, to taste
- 1/2 lb. wide egg noodles
- 10 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened, plus more for greasing
- 3 eggs, separated
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 cup cottage cheese
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 1/2 cups cornflakes cereal, lightly crushed

1 Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add egg noodles; cook, stirring occasionally, until just tender, about 3 minutes. Drain noodles; set aside.

2 Heat oven to 350°. Grease a 9" x 13" baking dish with butter; set aside. Using a hand mixer, beat egg whites in a bowl until stiff peaks form, about 2 minutes. Using a hand mixer, beat 8 tbsp. butter, plus sugar in a bowl until pale and fluffy, about 4 minutes. Add yolks, one at a time, beating until smooth after each addition. Add cottage cheese and sour cream; mix until combined. Add noodles and toss to coat. Gently fold in egg whites. Transfer mixture to prepared dish and spread into an even layer. Sprinkle with crushed cornflakes, and dot with remaining butter; bake until golden brown, 40-45 minutes.

Sweet and Sour Red Cabbage

SERVES 8-10

Red cabbage is braised in duck fat and

enlivened with red wine vinegar and caraway seeds (pictured on page 58), making it a perfectly balanced holiday side.

- 1/2 cup duck fat or bacon drippings
- 2 large yellow onions, thinly sliced
- 1 tbsp. caraway seeds
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 large head red cabbage (about 2 lb.), cored and finely shredded
- 1 cup red wine vinegar
- 1/2 cup sugar
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Melt fat in an 8-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Add onions, caraway, and bay leaf; cook, stirring occasionally, until golden, about 12 minutes. Stir in cabbage, vinegar, sugar, salt, and pepper. Reduce heat to medium; cook, covered, until cabbage is tender, about 1 hour. Serve hot or at room temperature.

Tomato Pudding

SERVES 8-10

This satisfying side of homemade croutons, tomatoes, and pecorino cheese (pictured on page 58) is based on one from Mary Sue Milliken. She sometimes substitutes aged Manchego cheese for the pecorino.

- 1 1-lb. loaf country bread, cut into 1" pieces
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 8 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 medium yellow onion, thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup chicken stock
- 1/2 cup grated pecorino romano
- 2 tbsp. dark brown sugar
- 2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 2 tbsp. roughly chopped thyme
- 1 28-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes in purée, crushed by hand
- 1 16-oz. can tomato purée

1 Heat oven to 375°. Toss bread with 1/2 cup oil, salt, and pepper on a baking sheet; spread into an even layer. Bake, stirring occasionally, until slightly crisp, 10-15 minutes; transfer to a large bowl and set aside.

2 Melt butter in a 6-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Add onion; cook until golden, 5-7 minutes. Stir in stock, half the pecorino, plus sugar, lemon juice, thyme, tomatoes, and tomato purée; cook until slightly reduced, about 20 minutes. Remove from heat and pour over bread; let sit until slightly cooled, then, using hands, lightly mash and stir together. Transfer to a 9" x 13" baking dish. Sprinkle remaining pecorino over top and drizzle with remaining oil; bake until golden brown and bubbling, 25-30 minutes.



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FOOD & WINE





Salted Caramel Apple The apple pies we eat today hardly differ from the ones the Pilgrims enjoyed in the 17th century; they brought over British recipes for fruit-packed, warmly-spiced pies along with the fruit itself. This version (see page 78 for recipe) adds a twist to the classic dessert in the form of luxurious ribbons of caramel salted just enough to make the apples' flavor pop.

MISS AMERICAN PIE

How one cook embraced the glory of America's iconic dessert

BY LESLEY PORCELLI PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW INGALLS

THE WORLD WENT QUIET, JUST FOR A MOMENT, when I pulled my salted caramel apple pie out of the oven last Thanksgiving. Those mingling aromas of butter, sugar, and fruit that had scented the house for the past 45 minutes suddenly intensified; the topography of the undulating crust and bubbling, jammy inlets came into focus like a map of a wonderful new place I would get to visit in a few hours, when everything had cooled just enough. But I couldn't wait and was all alone in the kitchen anyway. I broke off a piece of the bronzed crust, its jagged edge tinged with a caramelized bit of apple, and popped it into my mouth. It was piping hot, the apple tangy, the crust crisp, flaky perfection. Only when I emerged from my reverie did I register that plates were clinking and people talking in the next room.

We didn't always have it so good, pie and I. Like many great love affairs, our relationship started off on the wrong foot. Growing up,

I preferred Oreos and my mom's fresh-baked devil's food cake to the shocking-neon pies I encountered at the supermarket, each with canned fruit—bright orange peach, stoplight red cherry—floating in a terrifying, nearly solid gel.

I started coming around when, after college, I took a position as an editorial assistant at a glossy women's lifestyle magazine. There, pies with fruit tumbling out of hand-cut crusts emerged from the test kitchen almost daily. Each beckoned with dizzying, irresistible aromas and tasted divine.

A few months after I started that job, Thanksgiving rolled around, and inspired, I attempted to make an apple pie from scratch, my first ever. I had the recipe from the magazine, a classic two-crust apple pie spiced with cinnamon and nutmeg—perfect for the holiday table. Alas, though I was starting to love pie, it quickly became evident that it didn't yet return my affections. I tried to roll a perfect disk shape, but



Brown Butter Walnut Syrup-based nut pies have an uncertain history—one story is that the wife of a Karo Corn Syrup Company executive stumbled upon the gooey combination in her kitchen in the 1930s. In this pie (see page 74 for recipe), we've used meaty walnuts in place of the traditional pecan, adding brown butter to the syrup base for depth. Add tangy whipped sour cream on top for balance.



Coconut Lime Custard This luscious pie brings a tropical note to any holiday table: Tart limes are married with rich coconut in a silky smooth custard that melts on the tongue. The iconic American lime custard was created in the mid-19th century when cooks in the Florida Keys got hold of condensed milk and paired it with local Key limes—but swapping in coconut milk for condensed gives this pie (see page 76 for recipe) a subtler sweetness.

Cranberry Chiffon Incredibly light, this pie (see page 78 for recipe) owes its airiness to stiffly beaten egg whites added to the base. Chiffon—the name comes from the French for “cloth” and refers to a sheer, shimmery fabric too—works with all sorts of puréed fruits; here, cranberries lend a crimson hue and a sweet tartness.



my dough crumbled and cracked. The finished pie looked and smelled convincing enough, but the illusion dissolved in one bite—it was so grainy that occasionally I heard crunching-on-sand noises around the table. Adding insult was all the praise that the store-bought pumpkin pie received. In what kind of twisted world, I thought, does something mass-produced actually taste better than something from scratch?

So I turned to baking books, and the more I learned about pie, the more it intimidated me. Pie recipes, I noticed, began with long blocks of text that read as if crust were some temperamental mezzo-soprano that easily took offense. Television cooking segments about pie were even worse, the tone on the set as sober as the evening news.

"Everything has to be ice-cold," the baker would begin; the flour, the salt—even the countertop should go in the freezer if possible, to keep the dough from melting and going greasy. Touching the dough was out of the question, the warmth of your hands apparently enough to *ruin everything!*—so get out your food processor, but be careful,

I turned into a bona fide baker, able to whip up crusts with nothing more than flour, butter, salt, and my bare hands

because it might chop the butter too finely and *ruin everything!* Don't add too much water, because the dough will be tough, but don't add too little, because it won't come together. Then again, if you're new at this, you probably won't know what you're doing, so you might as well just resign yourself to subpar crust and err on the side of too much. And whatever you do, don't overwork the dough! Just mix the stuff until it comes together, then stop—don't even look at it again, lest you pay the price with overdeveloped glutens and a crust tough enough to chip teeth. Perfect the act of plastic wrapping the dough ball and transferring it to the fridge without actually handling it.

Forget that! I thought.

Pie and I lost touch until years later in a required class on pastry at culinary school. Our bald, menacing chef-instructor, who somehow managed to consistently turn out airy, perfect pie crusts, lumbered over as I was wrestling another noncompliant ball of dough.

"You didn't work it enough," he said after one look.

What? "Work" pie dough? As in, completely molest and manhandle

it? Before I could open my mouth to question him, he illustrated in the affirmative, grabbing my dough in his huge fingers and folding it into submission, transforming it from a patchy, powdery pile into a smooth, butter-flecked disk that held its shape. The key, he explained, was to develop enough glutens to allow the dough to hold together while keeping some lumps of butter intact. These would melt while baking, leaving behind air pockets—essential for a crust with layers of flakiness. The customary rest in the fridge that all pie recipes call for would be enough to relax the glutens that did form, preventing toughness. He was right; my finished pie, an Alsatian bacon and egg tart, could have won a prize, the smoky bacon and silky slices of egg complemented by—finally!—the most buttery and flaky pastry imaginable.

From that day forth, I was hooked. On the one hand, I now knew what I was doing, but on the other, pie still felt like a delicious challenge. Pie teaches you a new lesson every time—like how the apples you love might not be the best choice for pie (there's some wisdom to baking with stodgy Golden Delicious, which hold a firm texture in the heat of the oven rather than watering out as good eating apples do), and how there is a way to get a gooey nut pie without a soggy bottom crust. Just give the crust a fighting chance by pre-baking, and *voilà!*

Reader, I turned into a bona fide pie baker, able to whip up crusts in the most makeshift of kitchens with nothing more than flour, butter, salt, and my bare hands. I became one of those annoying people who lingers at farm stands, fondling the fruit, deciding on a whim which one to tuck into a pie later. I could pair apple with cranberry for tartness, or pear for mellowness...or why not put all three together?

I now indulge my fantasies of perfect summer days with berry pies consumed on sweltering evenings, and satisfy my husband's cravings for fall pies that mix fruit and spice with homey nostalgia. And I can't tell you how smug and superior I feel while weaving a lattice crust, as if I had been doing it all my life. Every time I trot out one of these babies, I am praised as if I've just descended from the sky with flowing robes and a tongue of fire on my head.

Which brings me back to Thanksgiving. It's now my holiday. I remain faithful to that caramel apple pie, but I flirt with a different pumpkin pie each year, changing up the crust, tinkering with the spices. This year I'm thinking a crisp maple brûlée layer on top. I have had plenty of game-day disasters, including a turkey that was overcooked on one side and still thawing on the other. But when I bring out my pies to wind down the meal, they're all anyone remembers. Every good love story, after all, should have a happy ending. 🍷

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Maple Pumpkin Brûlée Early pumpkin pies weren't what we know them to be today; the British treated the squash similarly to apples, slicing and layering them in a pie crust along with spices. The first recipe for puddinglike pumpkin pie was printed in *Amelia Simmons' American Cookery* in 1796. In the pie pictured (see page 78 for recipe), maple adds earthy sweetness, and a crisp brûléed sugar top creates a pleasing crackle.



Chocolate Ginger Chess The simple but beloved chess pie is a Southern classic, with a thick, sweet filling built on eggs, cream, butter, and sugar. Though origin myths about the pie's name abound, it probably derives from an archaic English spelling of the word *cheese*—a term that referred to desserts made with curd fillings. Chess pies come in myriad flavors; this chocolate version (see page 74 for recipe) gets a spicy kick from fresh ginger.



Cherry-Frangelico Mincemeat Medieval mincemeat pies actually contained minced meat mixed with expensive exotic dried fruits and spices for festive Christmas meals. Gradually the pie lost the meat, and today it's usually filled with highly spiced fresh and dried fruits sometimes blended with suet and soaked in brandy. In our variation (see page 74 for recipe), hazelnut-flavored Frangelico stands in for the brandy, adding a rich, nutty undertone that is perked up by dried cherries.

Flaky Butter Pie Dough

Makes enough for 2 crusts

This lightly sweetened buttery pie dough makes an incomparably flaky crust for all types of fruit, nut, and custard pies.

- 2 1/4 cups flour
- 1 tbsp. sugar
- 1 tsp. salt
- 12 tbsp. unsalted butter, cubed and chilled
- 6 tbsp. ice-cold water

Whisk flour, sugar, and salt in a bowl. Using a dough blender, two forks, or your fingers, cut butter into flour mixture, forming pea-size crumbles. Add water; work dough until smooth but with visible flecks of butter. (Alternatively, pulse ingredients in a food processor.) Divide dough in half and flatten into disks. Wrap disks in plastic wrap; chill 1 hour before using.

Brown Butter Walnut Pie with Sour Whipped Cream

SERVES 8

Earthy walnuts replace pecans in this version of the classic pie (pictured on page 68); browned butter accentuates the flavor of the nuts, and a sour cream topping offsets the richness of the filling.

For the crust and filling:

- Flour, for dusting
- 1/2 recipe Flaky Butter Pie Dough

- (see above)
- 13 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 3/4 cup light brown sugar
- 6 large eggs
- 1 1/4 cups light corn syrup
- 1 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 3 cups whole walnut halves, lightly toasted

For the topping:

- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 2 tbsp. confectioners' sugar
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract

1 Make the crust: Heat oven to 375°. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into a 12" round. Fit into a 9" pie plate. Trim edges and crimp; chill 30 minutes. Using a fork, prick the dough all over. Line dough with parchment paper and fill with pie weights or dried beans; bake 15 minutes. Remove paper and weights; let cool.

2 Make the filling: Melt butter in a 10" skillet over medium heat; cook until butter is dark golden brown with dark brown flecks and it gives off a nutty aroma, 20–22 minutes. Remove from heat; let cool. Whisk sugar and eggs in a bowl until pale and fluffy. Stir in browned butter, plus corn syrup, vanilla, and salt until smooth. Fold in walnuts and pour filling over dough; using a rubber spatula, spread into an even layer. Bake until just set in the center, about 40 minutes. Transfer pie to a rack and let cool completely before serving.

3 Make the topping: Whip heavy cream and sugar in a bowl until stiff peaks form. Fold in sour cream and vanilla. Serve slices of pie with a dollop of sour whipped cream.

Cherry-Frangello Mincemeat Pie

SERVES 8

Fresh and dried fruits steep in hazelnut liqueur for three days to make the filling for this holiday pie (pictured on page 73). Suet, a traditional mincemeat ingredient, adds moisture and richness, but vegetable shortening works just as well.

For the filling:

- 2 oz. chilled beef suet, grated on the small holes of a box grater, or 1/4 cup vegetable shortening
- 1 cup dried cherries
- 1/2 cup Frangello
- 1/4 cup golden raisins
- 1 tbsp. cornstarch
- 1 tbsp. grated lemon zest, plus 1 tbsp. fresh juice
- 1 tbsp. grated orange zest
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp. ground cardamom
- 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 pear, peeled, cored, and minced
- 1 tart apple, such as Granny Smith, peeled, cored, and minced

For assembling the pie:

- Flour, for dusting
- 1 recipe Flaky Butter Pie Dough (see left)
- 2 tbsp. heavy cream
- 2 tbsp. Demerara sugar

1 Make the filling: Combine all filling ingredients in a large bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and chill at least 3 days or up to 1 week.

2 Assemble the pie: On a lightly floured surface, roll 1 disk of dough into a 12" round. Fit into a 9" pie plate. Trim edges with a knife, leaving 1" dough overhanging edge of plate; chill 30 minutes. On a lightly floured piece of parchment paper, roll remaining disk of dough into a 12" round; trim, discarding edges, into an 8" square. Slice into eight 1"-thick strips; chill 30 minutes.

3 Heat oven to 375°. Pour filling over dough; using a rubber spatula, spread into an even layer. Lay four strips of dough vertically across the top of pie, about 1" apart (see "Weaving a Lattice," page 76). Fold first and third strips in half upward. Lay one horizontal strip just below pie's center. Unfold first and third vertical strips over it. Fold second and fourth vertical strips upward. Lay another horizontal strip below the first. Unfold second and fourth vertical strips over the bottom horizontal strip, then fold them again downward. Lay a third horizontal strip just above the pie's center. Continue folding and unfolding vertical strips

HOW TO CRIMP CRUSTS

Crimped pie edges aren't just pleasing to the eye; they prevent single pie crusts from slumping, and they seal in juicy fillings in double-crust pies. Here's how to crimp correctly:



① Using a paring knife, trim edges of dough, leaving 1" overhanging the edge of the pie plate.



② For a single-crust pie, fold and pinch the edges of overhanging dough under the edge of the pie plate. For a double-crust pie, pinch bottom and top crusts together and fold under.



③ Holding thumb and index finger horizontally, pinch 1" dough along the outside edge of the pie plate, and press the index finger of other hand into the pinched fold from the inside edge of the pie plate, forming a crimp. Repeat pinching and pressing all the way around at 1" intervals.

over one more remaining horizontal strip. Pinch bottom crust and lattice edges together; roll toward center of pie to hide lattice edges; crimp edges. Brush cream over crust, then sprinkle lattice with Demerara sugar. Bake until crust is golden and filling is bubbly, about 45 minutes. Let cool completely before serving.

Chocolate Ginger Chess Pie

SERVES 8

A decadent mix of chocolates and ginger up the ante on this classic Southern pie (pictured on page 72).

- Flour, for dusting
- 1/2 recipe Flaky Butter Pie Dough (see above left)
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1 3"-piece ginger, peeled and thinly sliced
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter, minced
- 2 oz. bittersweet chocolate, minced
- 1 oz. unsweetened chocolate, minced
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 3 eggs
- 2 tbsp. yellow cornmeal

FIVE THICKENERS FOR PIES



All thickeners provide the same function, transforming thin, runny liquids into smooth, viscous fillings, a key part of the pie-making process. There are several types of thickeners on market shelves, some better than others depending on the filling. **All-purpose flour** (top left) does a fine job, its molecules expanding when heated to absorb excess liquid from fruit fillings. It can taste starchy if not thoroughly cooked and has the

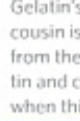
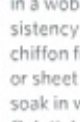
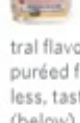
highest gelatinization temperature of all starches (212°F), so it's best used in long-baked pies like apple and pear. During the time it takes for the fruit to soften and caramelize, the flour's flavor cooks out, and the filling sets with a fairly light consistency. Gluten-free **cornstarch** (above) is more efficient at setting than flour; it enhances fruit's sweetness and results in a bright-tasting, smooth filling. Acid causes cornstarch's molecules to collapse, so it's best for relatively neutral fillings



like mincemeat. **Potato starch** (left), a gluten-free thickener made from starch molecules extracted from the tuber, has a silky texture and neutral flavor, perfect for pumpkin and puréed fillings. An odorless, colorless, tasteless thickener, **gelatin** (below) is derived from the collagen in animal proteins. When heated, its long molecules spread out and tangle together, capturing liquids in a wobbly webbing that lends consistency to mousse, custard, and chiffon fillings. Sold in powdered or sheet form, it takes only a quick soak in warm water to activate. Gelatin's plant-based, gluten-free cousin is **tapioca** (bottom), derived from the tuber cassava. Like gelatin and cornstarch, tapioca is clear when thickened and maintains a



slight chewy texture, making it good for setting the glazes that top fruit tarts. It is also an excellent thickener for double-crust pies.





Think of me as your blank canvas.



Be sweet



with berries and cream.

Or savory with tomatoes and pesto.



I inspire you.



You complete me.



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WEAVING A LATTICE

A lattice top, which adds visual interest to a pie, partially protects the filling, while the gaps in the weave allow steam to escape as the filling cooks. Here is how to make a simple four-row lattice.



1 Lay four strips of dough vertically across the top of the pie about an inch apart. Fold the first and third strips in half upward.



2 Lay one horizontal strip just below the pie's center. Unfold the first and third vertical strips over it. Fold the second and fourth vertical strips upward. Lay another horizontal strip below the first.



3 Unfold the second and fourth vertical strips over the bottom horizontal strip, then fold them downward again. Lay a third horizontal strip just above the pie's center.



4 Continue folding and unfolding vertical strips over one last horizontal strip. Pinch bottom crust and lattice edges together; roll toward center of pie to hide lattice edges. Pinch and crimp edges (see "How to Crimp Crusts" on page 74).

- 1 tsp. ground ginger
- $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. kosher salt
- 3 tbsp. confectioners' sugar
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped candied ginger

1 Heat oven to 375°. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into a 12" round. Fit into a 9" pie plate. Trim edges and crimp; chill 30 minutes. Using a fork, prick the dough all over. Line dough with parchment paper and fill with pie weights or dried beans; bake until golden, about 20 minutes. Remove paper and weights; let cool.

2 Reduce oven to 325°. Bring $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cream and ginger to a simmer in a 1-qt. saucepan over medium heat; set aside and cool to room temperature. Strain cream, discarding ginger, and set aside.

3 Place butter and chocolates in a bowl and set over a saucepan of simmering water. Heat, stirring until melted, 1-2 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside to cool slightly.

4 Whisk sugar and eggs in a bowl until light and fluffy. Whisk in cornmeal, ground ginger, and salt until smooth. Pour in melted chocolate in a thin stream, whisking constantly. Whisk in reserved cream. Pour filling over dough; using a rubber spatula, spread into an even layer. Bake until just set in the center, 30-35 minutes. Transfer pie to a rack; let cool completely.

5 Whip remaining cream with confectioners' sugar until stiff peaks form. Spread whipped cream over surface of pie, leaving a 1" border; garnish with candied ginger.

Coconut Lime Custard Pie SERVES 8

This cream-topped pie (pictured on page 69) is filled with a thick coconut milk custard that perfectly complements the zip of fresh lime juice and grated zest.

For the crust and filling:

- Flour, for dusting
- $\frac{1}{2}$ recipe Flaky Butter Pie Dough (see page 74)
- 1 13.5-oz. can coconut milk
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup milk
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup heavy cream
- 3 tbsp. grated lime zest, plus $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fresh juice
- 2 tbsp. flour
- 1 tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 2 eggs, plus 3 yolks

For the topping:

- 3 tbsp. sweetened shredded

EIGHT GREAT PIE TIPS



1 **Avoid soggy bottom crusts** by sprinkling about one tablespoon each of flour and sugar over the crust before adding the pie filling. As the filling cooks, this extra layer will protect the pie dough from absorbing too much moisture.



2 **Beat the dough** with a rolling pin after it rests. This will not only relax the gluten in the dough but also will soften it, making it easier to roll out.



3 **Rest your dough** in order to achieve a tender crust that won't shrink during baking. Roll it out, transfer it to a pie plate, and refrigerate for 30 minutes. This will allow the dough's glutens to relax, and firm up the

butter so it will melt slowly in the oven. Add the filling and top crust, crimp the dough edges, and refrigerate for 30 minutes more before baking.



4 **Use high fat**—at least 83 percent—butter for the richest, flakiest crusts. European brands like Plügra often fit the bill.



5 **Butter the pan** for a golden bottom crust and to prevent the pie from sticking.

6 **Sweat the fruit** for apple, pear, stone fruit, and berry pies (especially strawberries, which tend to hold water) to cook out the moisture, concentrate flavor, and ward against a soggy pie crust. Toss the fruit in lemon juice and a little sugar, then let it sit at least one hour or up to overnight. Afterward, drain off the accumulated juices, then proceed as directed with the fruit.

Reserved juices can be boiled down into syrup for soda or drizzled on ice cream or fresh fruit.



7 **Construct apple and pear pies tightly**, layering slices close together to avoid air pockets, and mound fruit slightly higher than the edge of the crust. The fruit shrinks as it cooks and releases its juices, so tight, full packing helps ensure a finished pie loaded with fruit.



8 **Go for a marbled effect** when cutting butter into flour to form dough. Make sure you can see some butter flecked throughout the mixture before you let it rest. As the dough cooks, the bits of butter will melt, forming air pockets in the crust's structure that create a delicate flakiness.

coconut

- 1 cup heavy cream
- 2 tbsp. granulated sugar
- 1 tbsp. grated lime zest

1 Make the crust: Heat oven to 375°. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into a 12" round. Fit into a 9" pie plate. Trim edges and crimp; chill 30 minutes. Using a fork, prick the dough all over. Line dough with parchment paper and fill with pie weights or dried beans; bake until golden, about 20 minutes. Remove paper and weights; let cool.

2 Make the filling: Bring coconut milk and sugar to a boil in a 2-qt. saucepan.

Reduce heat to medium; cook, stirring occasionally, until sugar is dissolved and mixture is very thick, about 45 minutes. Transfer mixture to a large bowl; let cool to room temperature.

3 Heat oven to 375°. Add remaining filling ingredients to coconut mixture and whisk until combined. Pour filling over dough; using a rubber spatula, spread into an even layer. Bake until just set in the center, about 50 minutes. Transfer pie to a rack and let cool completely.

4 Make the topping: Reduce oven to 300° and spread coconut on a baking sheet. Bake, stirring occasionally, until

Sadly, there won't be any leftovers.



PHILADELPHIA Pumpkin, Caramel & Pecan Cheesecake

PREP TIME: 15 min. | **TOTAL TIME:** 6 hours (incl. refrigerating) | **MAKES:** 16 servings

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1/2 cup chopped PLANTERS Pecans, divided | 1 Tbsp. pumpkin pie spice |
| 3/8 NABISCO Ginger Snaps, finely crushed (about 1 1/2 cups) | 1 tsp. vanilla |
| 1/4 cup butter or margarine, melted | 4 eggs |
| 4 pkg. (8 oz. each) PHILADELPHIA Cream Cheese, softened | 25 KRAFT Caramels |
| 1 cup sugar | 1/4 cup milk |
| 1 can (15 oz.) pumpkin | |

HEAT oven to 325°F.

CHOP 1/4 cup nuts finely; place in medium bowl. Add ginger snap crumbs and butter; mix well. Press onto bottom of 13x9-inch pan.

BEAT cream cheese and sugar in large bowl with mixer until blended. Add pumpkin, spice and vanilla; mix well.

Add eggs, 1 at a time, mixing on low speed after each just until blended. Pour over crust.

BAKE 45 min. or until center is almost set. Cool completely. Refrigerate 4 hours.

MICROWAVE caramels and milk in microwaveable bowl on HIGH 1 1/2 min. or until caramels are completely melted, stirring every 30 sec.; spoon over individual servings of cheesecake.

Sprinkle with remaining nuts.

SERVE with whipped cream.

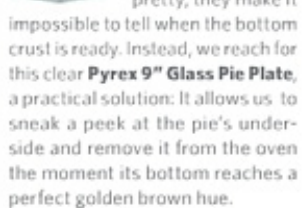
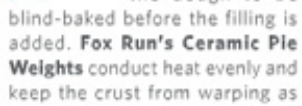
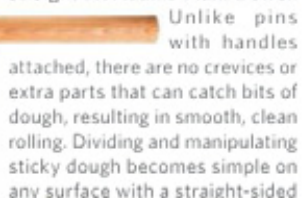


SIX GREAT TOOLS

Though the only tools you really need to make a pie crust are your bare hands and a trusty pan, there are a few basic but useful pieces of equipment that can help home cooks nail that flaky crust and ensure a successful pie, no matter the type of filling.

With long-cooked pies, like apple or pecan, the edges of the crust can cook faster than the filling and sometimes burn. **Mrs. Anderson's Pie Crust Shield**, an aluminum ring that sits on the perimeter of the pan, protects the crust's edges and ensures against them burning. When it comes time to cut cold butter into flour, the **Oxo Dough Blender with Blades** makes quick work out of a task that can seem onerous. To roll out dough smoothly to an even thickness, we reach for the thick, straight **JK Adams Plain Dowel**.

Unlike pins with handles attached, there are no crevices or extra parts that can catch bits of dough, resulting in smooth, clean rolling. Dividing and manipulating sticky dough becomes simple on any surface with a straight-sided **Bench Scraper**. For a pie filling that doesn't require a long cook time, a recipe may call for the dough to be blind-baked before the filling is added. **Fox Run's Ceramic Pie Weights** conduct heat evenly and keep the crust from warping as the dough cooks. A quick wash is all it takes to ready them for the next pie. While ceramic pie pans may look pretty, they make it impossible to tell when the bottom crust is ready. Instead, we reach for this clear **Pyrex 9" Glass Pie Plate**, a practical solution: It allows us to sneak a peek at the pie's underside and remove it from the oven the moment its bottom reaches a perfect golden brown hue.



golden and crisp, 15 minutes; let cool. Beat cream in a bowl until stiff peaks form. Fold in sugar and lime zest; transfer to a piping bag fitted with a 1/4" star tip. Pipe cream over surface of pie, leaving a 1-2" border; sprinkle with toasted coconut.

Cranberry Chiffon Pie

SERVES 8

Whipped egg whites aerate the tart cranberry custard in this pie (pictured on page 69). For a milder, fluffier filling, fold 1-2 cups whipped cream into the base along with the whipped egg whites to form what is known as a Bavarian pie.

- 1/2 cup Flour, for dusting
- 1 recipe Flaky Butter Pie Dough (see page 74)
- 2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 1/4 cup unsweetened cranberry juice
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 tsp. cranberry liqueur (see page 104)
- 2 tsp. fresh lemon juice
- 2 tsp. unflavored powdered gelatin
- 1 egg, separated, plus 1 white
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/2 cup heavy cream

1 Heat oven to 375°. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into a 12" round. Fit into a 9" pie plate. Trim edges and crimp; chill 30 minutes. Using a fork, prick the dough all over. Line dough with parchment paper and fill with pie weights or dried beans; bake until golden, about 20 minutes. Remove paper and weights and bake until cooked through, about 5 minutes more; let cool.

2 Bring 1 1/2 cups cranberries, 1/2 cup sugar, plus cranberry juice and salt to a simmer in a 2-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until cranberries burst and soften, 8-10 minutes. Let cool slightly, then transfer to a blender with cranberry liqueur and lemon juice; purée until smooth. Pass through a fine-mesh strainer into a bowl, pressing on and discarding solids; chill.

3 Combine gelatin and 3 tbsp. ice-cold water in a bowl; let sit to soften gelatin, about 5 minutes. Beat 1/4 cup sugar with egg yolk and milk in a 2-qt. saucepan over medium heat. Cook, stirring, until thick, 8-10 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in gelatin and cranberry mixtures until smooth. Transfer custard to a bowl and place a layer of plastic wrap directly over the surface to prevent a skin from forming; chill until just beginning to set at edges, about 30 minutes.

4 Whisk egg whites in a bowl until stiff peaks form. Stir 1/4 of the whites into chilled custard; using a rubber spatula, gently fold in the remaining whites

to combine. Pour filling over dough; using a rubber spatula, spread into an even layer. Chill, uncovered, until set, about 1 hour.

5 Spread 1/4 cup sugar on a plate. Boil remaining 1/2 cup sugar with 1/2 cup water in a 2-qt. saucepan until sugar is dissolved, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in remaining cranberries. Using a slotted spoon, transfer cranberries to plate; roll in sugar and scatter over top of pie. Whip cream in a bowl until stiff peaks form; using a spoon, dollop cream in center of pie.

Maple Pumpkin Brûlée Pie

SERVES 8

Maple syrup is folded into the filling of this take on a classic (pictured on page 71). Just before serving, the chilled pie is brûléed, yielding a caramelized top with a dramatic crunch.

- 1/2 cup Flour, for dusting
- 1 recipe Flaky Butter Pie Dough (see page 74)
- 1/4 cup dark brown sugar
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 15-oz. can pumpkin purée
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- 2 1/2 tbsp. potato starch
- 2 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 1/2 tsp. ground ginger
- 1 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp. ground clove
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/4 cup Demerara sugar

1 Heat oven to 375°. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into a 12" round. Fit into a 9" pie plate. Trim edges and crimp; chill 30 minutes.

2 Whisk sugars and eggs in a bowl until pale and fluffy. Add pumpkin, cream, syrup, potato starch, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, clove, and salt; whisk until smooth. Pour filling over dough; using a spatula, spread into an even layer. Bake until just set in the center, 45-50 minutes. Transfer pie to a rack; let cool to room temperature, then refrigerate until cold, about 1 hour.

3 Sprinkle Demerara sugar evenly over surface of pie. Guide the flame of a blowtorch back and forth over surface until sugar caramelizes. Serve immediately.

Salted Caramel Apple Pie

SERVES 8

Adapted from a recipe from Brooklyn, New York's Four & Twenty Blackbirds, this deep-dish pie (pictured on page 66) is packed with apples and a thick salted caramel sauce. Choose both sweet and tart apples to balance the caramel's richness.

- 1/2 cup Flour, for dusting
- 1 recipe Flaky Butter Pie Dough (see page 74)
- 3 tbsp. flour, plus more for dusting

- 7 baking apples, such as Golden Delicious, Granny Smith, or Honeycrisp (about 3 pounds), peeled, cored, and thinly sliced
- 3 tbsp., plus 1 cup granulated sugar
- Juice of 2 lemons
- 8 tbsp. unsalted butter, cubed
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1/2 cup Demerara sugar
- 1/2 tsp. Angostura bitters
- 1/4 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp. ground allspice
- 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/8 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 tsp. flake sea salt
- 1 egg, lightly beaten with 1 tsp. water

1 On a lightly floured surface, roll 1 disk of dough into a 12" round. Fit into a 9" deep-dish pie plate. Trim edges with a knife, leaving 1" dough overhanging edge of plate; chill 30 minutes. On a lightly floured piece of parchment paper, roll remaining disk of dough into a 12" round; trim, discarding edges, into a 9" square. Slice into six 1 1/2"-thick strips; chill 30 minutes.

2 Toss apples with 2 tbsp. granulated sugar and lemon juice; cover with plastic wrap and set aside 1 hour. Whisk 1 cup sugar and 1/4 cup water in a 2-qt. saucepan over medium heat; cook, without stirring, until the sugar dissolves, 2-3 minutes. Add butter; bring to a boil. Continue cooking until the mixture turns a deep red-brown, about 25 minutes or until a candy thermometer inserted in sauce reads 325°. Remove from heat. Carefully add cream, stirring until sauce is smooth.

3 Heat oven to 375°. Stir 1/2 cup Demerara sugar with 2 tbsp. flour, plus bitters, nutmeg, allspice, cinnamon, kosher salt, and pepper in a large bowl. Drain apples, discarding juices, and add to bowl; toss to coat in spice mixture. Sprinkle remaining flour and sugar over crust; lightly arrange apples over dough, mounding them slightly higher in the center. Pour caramel sauce evenly over apples. Sprinkle with half the sea salt. Lay three strips of dough vertically across the top of pie, about 1 1/2" apart (see "Weaving a Lattice," page 76). Fold first and third strips in half upward. Lay one horizontal strip at pie's center. Unfold first and third vertical strips over it. Fold second vertical strip upward. Lay another horizontal strip below the first. Unfold second vertical strip over the bottom horizontal strip, then fold it again downward. Lay a third horizontal strip just above the pie's center and unfold second vertical strip. Pinch bottom crust and lattice edges together; roll toward center of pie to hide lattice edges; crimp edges. Brush egg over crust, then sprinkle lattice with remaining Demerara sugar and sea salt. Bake until crust is golden and filling is bubbly, about 1 hour. Let cool completely before serving.

FIVE BOUTIQUE WINERIES ONE VISION

Artwork by Calligrapher Juichi Yoshikawa at the winery in Noto.



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Chickpea stew with lamb, pork, and veal (see page 94 for recipe). Facing page: Gracinda Palma bakes bread at her mother Joana Roque's bakery in Vidigueira, Portugal.



BY JEAN ANDERSON
PHOTOGRAPHS
BY TODD COLEMAN

THE FOOD I DREAM OF

One writer's
love letter
to Alentejo,
the sleepy
Portuguese
region whose
rich, rustic
foods hold her
in thrall

As soon as I cleared customs at Lisbon Airport, I was in my rental Volkswagen heading east into Alentejo, eager to dip my spoon into a bowl of *açorda à Alentejana*, the garlicky bread-thickened, cilantro-packed soup found in every home, restaurant, and farmhouse in the region. The rustic dish is served hot, so the eggs that are traditionally broken into it poach on contact—one bite and I always remember why Alentejo is my favorite place in the world.

I've never understood travelers to Portugal who, hell-bent on catching rays at a southern beach, bomb through this vast province rippling across a third of the country, where cork oaks, misshapen as scarecrows, dance into infinity, whitewashed villages pop up like icebergs off-course, and medieval castle towns cling to mountainous outcrops of granite.

My love affair with Alentejo began in the 1960s when I was assigned a feature article on Portugal. Though I'd never set foot in the country, the instant I reached Alentejo, I felt immediately at home. Maybe it was the red soil, so reminiscent of the South where I grew up, or the pottery (an obsession of mine)—the brightly colored clay plates, platters, and pots made everywhere in the region. But more likely it was the food. I fell hard for *pão*, the crisp-crust, chewy country bread that's the foundation of so many of Alentejo's dishes; the deeply flavorful Black Iberian pork; the fruity olive oil; the nutty sheep cheeses; the tomatoes.

Alentejo's tomatoes were the plumpest and reddest I'd ever seen. And, oh, the soups made from these tomatoes! They ran the gamut from hot, bright-tasting broths simmered with flavorful bacon and chouriço drippings to icy gazpachos flecked with bits of red and green bell pepper. At the Saturday market in Estremoz in the eastern part of the province, I found ropes of *linguiça* sausages—crimson with

the salty-sweet red pepper paste known as *massa de pimentão*—ready to grill, drop into soups, or slice and slap between two pieces of bread. Addicted to achingly sweet Southern cakes, I immediately took to Portugal's rich convent desserts (see "Heavenly Sweets," page 90), like the

and prefer its honest, unpretentious cuisine to all others. On my most recent trip, I caught up with old friends, rambled through the walled towns and pottery villages that first caught my fancy so long ago, and returned to the restaurants that do justice to Alentejo's earthy cuisine, the magnet that keeps pulling me back. I discovered that sleepy Alentejo is beginning to modernize, but the region still remains faithful to the cuisine's ancient roots.

MARIA DE LOURDES MODESTO, an Alentejo native who was the country's most beloved TV chef



From left: Home cook Conceição Louro prepares lunch in her Alentejo kitchen; braised pork and clams served with lemon (see page 96 for recipe).

delicate brûléed scramble of *encharcada*, golden as the yolks with which it's made. On that first trip, I ate myself out of shape, filling steno pads with notes on dishes I wanted to try back in my Stateside kitchen.

Hooked on the flavors of Alentejo, I returned year after year, sometimes even without an assignment. While I've come to know Portugal intimately since that first visit, I've always felt most at home in Alentejo,

I QUICKLY TOOK TO RICH CONVENT EGG SWEETS LIKE THE DELICATE, BRÛLEED SCRAMBLE OF ENCHARCADA, GOLDEN AS THE YOLKS WITH WHICH IT'S MADE

JEAN ANDERSON is a multi-award-winning cookbook author. This is her first article for *SAVEUR*.





for years, once told me that Alentejo's food "is the most Portuguese of Portuguese food." It's an agricultural cuisine shaped by the land and those who came this way from the Mediterranean and North Africa ages before. As early as 210 B.C., the Romans turned Alentejo into their breadbasket with farms and olive orchards. The Moors, settling in centuries later for a reign of nearly 500 years, left their culinary mark in the almond, lemon, and orange trees they planted. The East Indian cinnamon brought home by Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama became a staple of the cuisine, along with significant New World arrivals: tomatoes and peppers, both sweet and incendiary. Alentejo cooks distinguished themselves early on by pairing these ingredients in their own ways, combining chicken with chouriço, and chickpeas with Portugal's beloved *bacalhau* (dried salt cod). But for me, one combination trumps them all—the magical pork and clam union known as *porco à Alentejana*.

This dish, un-shucked baby clams braised with pieces of pork lightly rouged with sweet red pepper paste, lured me back to Restaurante Filhao in Evora, the bustling capital of Upper Alentejo. Opened by Manuel Filhao shortly after World War II and now run by sons Amor and Gabriel and their children, the restaurant is built on classic Alentejo dishes, and its menu has barely changed over the years. I lunched there with my old friends Luís and Conceição Abílio, eating my fill of the succulent *porco à Alentejana*, savoring each bite that married land and sea. Of course I saved room for *encharcada*, that ruinously sweet eggy dessert created long ago at Evora's 15th-century Santa Clara Convent.

A few days later, at the country home she and Luís own in the nearby village of Evoramonte, Conceição showed me how to make *encharcada*. A

**SLOWLY, SHE
SOFTENED
ONIONS AND
GARLIC IN
HOT BACON
DRIPPINGS
UNTIL THEY
WERE GOLDEN,
THEN ADDED
COARSELY
CHOPPED
TOMATOES**

delicately featured woman who knows her way around the Alentejo kitchen, she sieved raw egg yolks before swirling them into a skillet of boiling sugar syrup. Adding them bit by bit in a circular motion around the edge of the skillet, she scrambled waves of rich yolks ever so gently and in layers, which is what gives the dessert its complex texture. Conceição scooped the sweet mixture into a shallow earthenware casserole, dusted it with cinnamon, and carefully caramelized the top with a small butane torch. I spooned it up, pleased to finally know the secret of *encharcada's* sublime silkiness.

There's always more to learn about this food, so for another lesson in home cooking, I looked up Conceição Louro in Estremoz, an Alentejo native known locally for the traditional dishes she's been cooking for decades. Her husband Miguel and son Luís now produce some of Alentejo's best table wines, and when I arrived at Quinta do Mouro, the harvest was in full fury with truckloads of grapes sweating under a blazing sun, ready to be crushed.

Oblivious to it all, Louro, a tall, striking woman with shoulder-length auburn hair, turned coolly to a basket of red-ripe tomatoes. It was time to show me how to make Alentejo's robust *sopa de tomate*, a family favorite. She began with bits of smoked bacon crisped and browned in olive oil (continued on page 90)





Conceição Louro scoops up the poached eggs that garnish a traditional tomato soup from Alentejo (see page 96 for recipe).





Braised spareribs and potatoes (see page 96 for recipe). Facing page: Luis and Conceição Abilio sit down for dinner at their country home in the town of Evoramonte.





A man waits at Joana Roque's bread shop in Vidigueira. Facing page: pan-fried salt cod chips (see page 96 for recipe).

NO MEAL IS COMPLETE WITHOUT THE CHEWY COUNTRY BREAD KNOWN AS PÃO. IN THE TOWN OF VIDIGUEIRA, JOANA ROQUE BAKES IT IN A STONE OVEN FUELED BY OLIVE BRANCHES

(continued from page 84) with slices of chouriço. Slowly, she softened onions and garlic in the drippings until they were golden—a simple Portuguese base for sauces and soups known as *refogado*—and then added coarsely chopped tomatoes. The pot was left to bubble lazily for nearly an hour until the disparate flavors of pork and tomato melded into one. Like so many other Alentejo dishes, *sopa de tomate* is built over chunks of *pão*, yeasty country bread which goes into the bowls first, followed by soup and glorious barely poached eggs, eased in just seconds before serving. No Alentejo meal, whether eaten in a home kitchen or a fine restaurant, is complete without that *pão*, the flavorful bread made with a hard wheat known as *trigo duro*. My favorite comes from the town of Vidigueira, where local baker Joana Roque cooks it in a stone oven fueled by dried olive branches. Louro reminded me this dish should always be eaten right away: “Never reheat a soup that has bread in it—the bread disappears!”

THOUGH ALENTEJO isn’t as famous for its wines as other regions of Portugal, gold-medal bottles have recently been produced in this land of pork, cork, and olives. The wines are still

being made the old Roman way in Vila de Frades, however, just two kilometers away from the sprawl of Roman ruins at São Cucufate in Lower Alentejo. Just before my trip, I learned about País das Uvas, the century-old *adega* where the wine is aged in *talhas*, towering terra-cotta amphoras that have been used for thousands of years.

I’d barely arrived at País das Uvas when owner António Honrado, a handsome 44-year-old, showed me his latest batch of wine. The frothy red must of foot-crushed grapes sat waist-high in a stoneware vat. The

renditions of regional dishes. Honrado’s wife Jacinta and her mother Francisca prepared lunch, sending out farm-fresh eggs gently beaten and cooked with wild mushrooms to start, then *cozido de grão*—a fortifying chickpea stew with pork, lamb, veal, sausage, and a garden of vegetables, plus a handful of freshly chopped mint. To finish, there was a puff of *sericaia*, a delicate cinnamon-dusted dessert baked in a *tacho de barro*, one of the locally made heavy clay casseroles indispensable to every Alentejo cook because it distributes heat so evenly. And



From left: a shepherd tends to his animals by the walls of Evoramonte; a Portuguese nun shapes traditional convent egg sweets.

must, he told me, will go into the *talhas* in February, and as the yeasts in the surrounding air ferment the grapes, skins and seeds will drop to the bottom, forming a lees that deepens the wine’s flavor and acts as a natural filter. The new wine will be drawn through it at the ceremonial first tasting on November 11, São Martinho (St. Martin of Tour’s Day).

I stayed for lunch at País das Uvas, well-known for its hearty

that Roman wine? The rustic red blend surprised me with its richness and balance.

DESPITE ITS ANCIENT ways, it struck me on this trip, as I drove along the Lisbon-Madrid highway, that Alentejo, for eons a slumbering giant, is beginning to modernize like the rest of Portugal. Nowhere was this more evident than at Alqueva Lake. From the car park of Mon-saraz, a lofty castle tower in an

Heavenly Sweets

Many of Alentejo’s rich egg desserts trace their roots to the 15th century, when Portuguese nuns starched their habits with egg whites and found themselves with an excess of yolks. To put all those orphaned yolks to good use, the sisters dreamed up a constellation of celestial desserts and prepared them in their convent kitchens. While researching my cookbook *The Food of Portugal* (William Morrow, 1986), I learned from a culinary instructor in Faro that there were friendly rivalries among the nuns as they competed to create the most imaginative, whimsical, and delicious egg sweets. Among the hundreds of sugary egg desserts to have come out of Portugal’s convents are such Alentejo classics

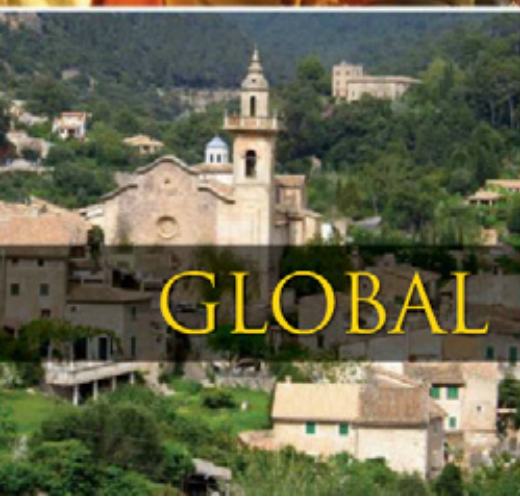


as *encharcada*—a soft scramble of egg and sugar syrup traditionally caramelized under a broiler, popularized by Évora’s Convento de Santa Clara. *Sericaia*, an airy soufflé dusted with cinnamon, originates in the episcopal town of Évora and is sometimes served with locally grown sugar plums. As if to prove that the cloistered sisters had a sense of humor, they often gave their creations mischievous names such as *papos-de-anjo*, “angel cheeks,” tender rounds of baked egg custard poached in sugar syrup, and *toucinho do céu*, “bacon from heaven,” a dense, yolk-enriched almond cake traditionally made with lard. The desserts are so integral to Alentejo’s regional cuisine, they are still created faithfully by Portuguese home cooks. —J.A.



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WHERE TO EAT

Herdade da Malhadinha Nova
7800-601 Alburnoa, Beja (284/965-211). Expensive. This kitchen honors old Alentejo with pork from the estate's own farm.

Herdade do Esporão 7200-999
Reguengos de Monsaraz (266/509-270). Expensive. A magnet for wine lovers, with modern spins on the classics.

Restaurante Fialho 16 Travessa
dos Mascarenhas, Évora (266/703-079). Expensive. Locals power lunch in style at this family-run restaurant in Évora.

Restaurante Moinho do Cu
Torto 2A Rua de Santo André, Évora
(266/771-060). Inexpensive. Try the country bread called *pão* with sheep cheese at this converted miller's house.

Restaurante O Barro 44 Rua D.
Arnilda Eliezer Kamenezky, Redondo
(917/239-899). Moderate. Richly browned slices of Iberian pork are a specialty at this tiny village kitchen.

Restaurante País das Uvas 19
Rua General Humberto Delgado, Vila
de Frades (284/441-023). Moderate. Rustic, hearty soups pair with Roman wines near the ruins of São Cucufate.

Tasquinha do Oliveira 45 Rua
Cândido dos Reis, Évora (266/744-841). Moderate. Elegant tapas like salt cod chips draw crowds.

WHERE TO STAY

Convento do Espinheiro 7005-
839 Canaviats, Évora (266/788-200). Doubles: \$250 up. A luxury hotel tucked into a 15th-century convent.

Pousada dos Lóios de Évora
7000-804 Largo Conde Vila-Flor,
Évora (266/730-070). Doubles: \$30 up. A no-frills converted monastery conveniently located in the city's center.



area with roots so deep there are Stone Age relics all about, I could see Alqueva shimmering over the horizon. I was staggered by its immensity. Created by damming the Guadiana River in 2002, it's now Europe's largest man-made lake. Alqueva brings precious water to Alentejo's arid plains, but it had so impacted the landscape that I was disoriented as I drove from Monsaraz to the village of São Pedro do Corval on a two-lane blacktop once as familiar as my own driveway.

To my great surprise, the food of Alentejo was also beginning to

with brightly colored Alentejo plates. The traditional dishes were excellent, as were the newly spun: updated fritters of *bacalhau*, the salt cod batter-fried thin and crisp; poached quail's eggs with chunky black sausage served hot off the grill; and an elegant escabeche of partridge.

Even in smaller villages, cooks were beginning to catch the new wave. At O Barro, a tiny restaurant in the pottery town of Redondo, a gifted cook named Rosa Filipe worked miracles, bouncing boneless slivers of pork in and out of a hissing skillet, to serve them simply

**PORTUGUESE
TAPAS ARE
EXCELLENT:
DELICATE
CHIPS OF
BACALHAU,
THE SALT COD
COOKED THIN
AND CRISP;
POACHED
QUAIL'S EGGS
WITH BLACK
SAUSAGE
SERVED HOT
OFF THE GRILL**



Locals take a breather in a cobble square of Évora Monte.

change. Suddenly *petiscos*, Portuguese tapas, were trendy. Platters once piled high with meat, fish, or fowl and both potatoes and rice were being edged out by smaller plates offering just a few bites. I quickly found a favorite place to pig out on *petiscos*: Manuel and Carolina Oliveira's sophisticated Tasquinha do Oliveira, a nook of a restaurant that wasn't open last time I was in Évora. There were just six tables and a minuscule kitchen, but framed culinary awards crowded walls decked

well-seasoned with a deep, rich sear. They were *secrets*, a trendy cut of black pork whose precise source remains a mystery. Some cooks claim these little slices are cut from the front leg, some say hind, while others insist they come from the breast or back. After extensive research, I've come to suspect that *secrets* come from different parts of the hog, depending on what's available, which explains why tenderness and flavor vary, and also accounts for their name. *Secreto*, after all, means "secret."

If I needed further proof that Alentejo is modernizing, I found it in the tasting menu at Herdade do Esporão, the first estate to mass-produce top-quality Alentejo wines. The four-course feast laid before me featured seared scallop salad with apples, poached cod in a meaty *jus* with mushrooms, roast loin of black pork with fennel and garlic-creamed yellow potatoes, and, instead of a traditional convent sweet, a dark chocolate soufflé with a side of raspberry sorbet. Just 75 miles south at Herdade da Malhadinha Nova, an estate known for its wines, extra-virgin olive oils, and black hogs, even more reinvented recipes popped up. My multicourse lunch included an unforgettably fresh chickpea and *bacalhau* salad, black pork mixed grill (made from the farm's own pigs), and a rich dark chocolate cake. It was a sophisticated departure from the cuisine I was accustomed to, yet the flavors of the pork, chickpeas, salt cod, and olive oil were intact.

When it came time to leave, I found myself already thinking about my next visit. Despite the changes beginning to stir, I'll always be at home in Alentejo, where cooks remain anchored by tradition, and a blushing plate of *porco à Alentejana* and a hot, perfect bowl of *açorda* await.



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COOK WITH NAPLES

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Clockwise from left: convent egg sweet; bread and garlic soup with cilantro; salt cod, chickpea, and egg salad. Recipes begin below.

☛ Açorda à Alentejana

(Bread and Garlic Soup with Cilantro)

SERVES 6-8

The recipe for this garlicky bread soup (pictured at top right) comes from Rosa Filipe of O Barro restaurant in Redondo, Portugal, who claims it is nicknamed "beggar's soup" because it contains no meat or fish.

- 4 cups roughly chopped cilantro leaves and stems
- 7 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1 large green bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and roughly chopped
- 1 serrano pepper, stemmed, seeded, and roughly chopped
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup olive oil
- $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. Portuguese pão bread (see page 104), or 2 kaiser rolls, cut into 1" cubes and toasted
- 8 cups chicken stock
- 4 eggs, lightly beaten

1 Pulse cilantro, garlic, bell pepper, serrano, salt, and pepper in a food processor until roughly chopped. Add oil;

purée to a smooth paste. Place $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of paste in a bowl. Add bread and toss to coat; set aside.

2 Heat remaining paste in a 6-qt. saucepan over medium heat; cook until fragrant, 2-3 minutes. Add stock and bring to a boil. While stirring constantly, slowly drizzle in eggs; cook until eggs are just set, about 1 minute. Remove from heat and stir in bread mixture; serve hot.

Cozido de Grão

(Chickpea Stew with Lamb, Pork, and Veal)

SERVES 6-8

Chickpeas are bolstered with spicy sausage and three kinds of meat in this filling stew (pictured on page 80) served at Pais das Uvas in Vila de Frades, Portugal.

- 2 tbsp. lard or unsalted butter
- 6 oz. cured Portuguese chouriço sausage (see page 104), sliced $1\frac{1}{2}$ " thick
- 6 oz. boneless lamb shoulder, cut into $1\frac{1}{2}$ " pieces
- 6 oz. boneless pork shoulder, cut

- into $1\frac{1}{2}$ " pieces
- 6 oz. boneless veal shoulder, cut into $1\frac{1}{2}$ " pieces
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 medium yellow onions, roughly chopped
- 1 tbsp. paprika
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. cayenne pepper
- 6 cups chicken stock
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 lb. Yukon gold potatoes, peeled and cut into 1" pieces
- 4 medium carrots, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ " pieces
- 2 15-oz. cans chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- $\frac{1}{2}$ medium butternut squash (about 1 lb.), peeled, seeded, and cut into 1" pieces
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup roughly chopped mint
- Portuguese pão (see page 104), or rustic country bread, for serving

Heat lard or butter in a 6-qt. Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add sausage and cook until browned, 9-10 minutes. Using a slotted spoon,

transfer sausage to a bowl; set aside. Season lamb, pork, and veal with salt and pepper, and working in batches, cook meats, turning as needed, until browned, about 20 minutes. Transfer to bowl with sausage. Add garlic and onions to pan; cook, stirring occasionally, until slightly caramelized, about 20 minutes. Stir in paprika and cayenne; cook until fragrant, 1-2 minutes. Return sausage and meat to pan, along with stock and bay leaves; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and cook, partly covered, until meat is tender, about 45 minutes. Add potatoes, carrots, chickpeas, squash, salt, and pepper; continue to cook until vegetables are tender, about 30 minutes more. Discard bay leaves and stir in mint. Ladle stew into bowls; serve with country bread on the side.

☛ Encharcada

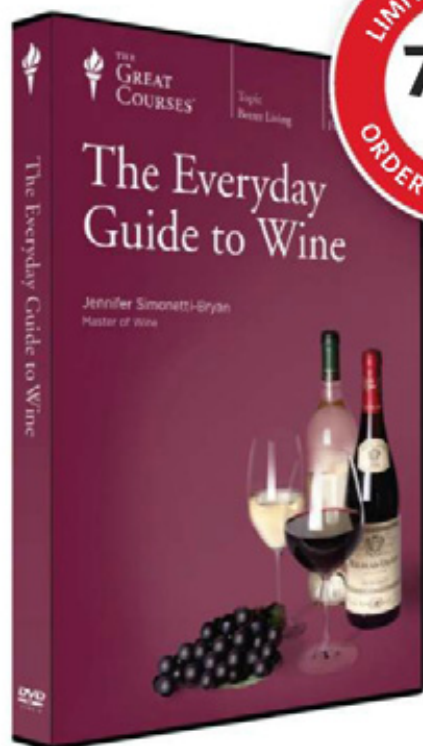
(Convent Egg Sweet)

SERVES 6-8

The recipe for this egg-based sweet (pictured top left), which originated in a medieval Portuguese convent, comes from home cook Conceição Abílio of Évora.



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- 2 eggs, plus 9 yolks
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 2"-long strips lemon zest
- 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon

Whisk eggs and yolks in a bowl. Using a ladle, press the eggs and yolks through a fine-mesh sieve into a bowl; set aside. Bring sugar, lemon zest, and 1 cup water to a boil in a 12" skillet; cook, without stirring, until sugar is dissolved and a candy thermometer inserted in the syrup reads 225°, about 5 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, discard lemon zest; reduce heat to medium. While stirring, slowly drizzle egg mixture into syrup. Cook until small curds form and mixture is very thick and appears slightly curdled, about 15 minutes. Transfer to a 9" pie plate and sprinkle with cinnamon. Guide the flame of a blowtorch back and forth over the top of the egg sweet until the surface caramelizes. (Alternatively, place under oven broiler.) Serve warm or at room temperature.

Entrecosto no Forno

(Braised Spareribs and Potatoes)

SERVES 4-6

Ribs are marinated in a thick red pepper paste, braised until tender, and served over roasted potatoes (pictured on page 87). The paste is well seasoned, so there's no need to add salt.

- 2 racks (about 6 lb.) St. Louis-style pork spareribs
- 1 1/2 cups massa de pimentão (see "Simply Red," page 100), or jarred red bell pepper paste, preferably Incipit brand (see page 104)
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 3 lb. Yukon gold potatoes, peeled and cut into 1 1/2" pieces

1 Place ribs in a roasting pan and rub with pepper paste, coating completely. Cover with plastic wrap; chill overnight.

2 Heat oven to 325°. Let ribs come to room temperature. Uncover pan and season ribs with black pepper. Cover pan with aluminum foil; bake until ribs are tender, about 2 hours. Remove from oven; increase oven to 425°. Transfer ribs to a baking sheet. Scrape red pepper paste from ribs and transfer to a bowl. Pour half the drippings from pan over paste; whisk until smooth. Add potatoes to roasting pan; toss with remaining drippings and season with black pepper. Place ribs over potatoes. Brush paste mixture over ribs. Return to oven; bake, uncovered, until ribs and potatoes are tender, about 1 hour more. Remove pan and heat oven broiler. Broil

until ribs are slightly charred, 3-4 minutes. Transfer ribs to a cutting board; let rest until cool enough to handle, then slice into individual ribs. Transfer potatoes to a large serving platter; place ribs over top.

Fritas de Bacalhau

(Pan-Fried Salt Cod Chips)

MAKES ABOUT 3 DOZEN

A thin batter of salt cod, garlic, and onions, is shallow-fried to make fine, crisp chips (pictured on page 88).

- 1/4 lb. dried salt cod
- 1 cup canola oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/2 small yellow onion, minced
- 1 cup flour
- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt, plus more to taste
- 1 egg
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
- 2 tsp. finely chopped cilantro

1 Place cod in a 2-qt. saucepan and cover with 2" cold water; bring to a boil over high heat and cook for 20 minutes. Drain cod, return to saucepan, and repeat process twice more. Transfer cod to a bowl and flake with a fork into small chunks; set aside. Heat 1 tbsp. oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Add garlic and onion; cook until soft, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a bowl; set aside. Whisk flour, salt, egg, and 1 1/2 cups water in a bowl. Stir cod, garlic and onion, butter, and cilantro together to form a thin batter.

2 Wipe skillet clean and add 1/2 cup oil; heat over high heat. Working in batches and adding remaining oil as necessary, pour about 1 tbsp. batter into skillet; cook, flipping once, until golden brown, 1-2 minutes. Using a spatula, transfer chips to paper towels to drain. Season with salt and serve hot.

Porco à Alentejana

(Braised Pork and Clams)

SERVES 4-6

Pork and fresh clams (pictured on page 83) are braised in an aromatic mixture of wine, tomato, and red pepper paste.

- 2 1/2 lb. boneless pork tenderloins, sliced crosswise 1/4" thick
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 tbsp. massa de pimentão (see "Simply Red," page 100), or jarred red bell pepper paste, preferably Incipit brand (see page 104)
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 tbsp. lard or unsalted butter

- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 large yellow onion, minced
- 2 tsp. tomato paste
- 2 1/2 lb. small clams such as little-neck or Manila, scrubbed
- 1 tbsp. roughly chopped cilantro
- 1 tbsp. roughly chopped parsley
- Lemon wedges, for serving

1 Season pork with salt and pepper in a bowl. Rub with pepper paste; add wine and bay leaves. Cover with plastic wrap; chill overnight.

2 Drain pork, reserving marinade; pat pork dry using paper towels. Melt lard in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Working in batches, cook pork, flipping once, until browned, 18-20 minutes. Transfer pork to a plate; set aside. Add oil, garlic, and onion to skillet; cook until golden, 6-8 minutes. Stir in tomato paste, reserved marinade, and 1 1/2 cups water; bring to a boil. Return pork to skillet, reduce heat to medium-low and cook, partly covered, until pork is tender, about 30 minutes.

3 Increase heat to high and add the clams. Cook, covered, until the clams open, 8-10 minutes. Remove from heat and discard any unopened clams; stir in cilantro, parsley, salt, and pepper. Transfer to a serving dish; serve with lemon wedges on the side.

Salada de Bacalhau a Grão-de-bico

(Salt Cod, Chickpea, and Egg Salad)

SERVES 4-6

This hearty salad (pictured on page 94) combines Alentejo's traditional salt cod, chickpeas, and hard-boiled eggs into an elegant petisco, the Portuguese version of tapas.

- 1/2 lb. dried salt cod
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 1 15-oz. can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 3 eggs, hard-boiled, peeled, and thinly sliced crosswise
- 1 tbsp. roughly chopped cilantro
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 3 tbsp. cider vinegar

1 Place cod in a 2-qt. saucepan and cover with 2" cold water; bring to a boil over high heat and cook for 20 minutes. Drain cod, return to saucepan, and repeat process twice more. Transfer cod to a large bowl and flake with a fork into large chunks; set aside.

2 Heat oil in a 1-qt. saucepan over medium heat. Add garlic; cook until

crisp and golden brown, about 2 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer garlic to bowl with cod; set oil aside and let cool. Add chickpeas, eggs, cilantro, salt, and pepper to bowl with cod. Whisk vinegar with reserved oil and add to cod mixture; toss to coat. Serve cold or at room temperature.

Sopa de Tomate

(Portuguese Tomato Soup with Poached Eggs)

SERVES 6

Portuguese home cook Conceição Louro of Estremoz infuses tomatoes with smoky bacon and sausage in this rich tomato soup served with poached eggs (pictured on page 85).

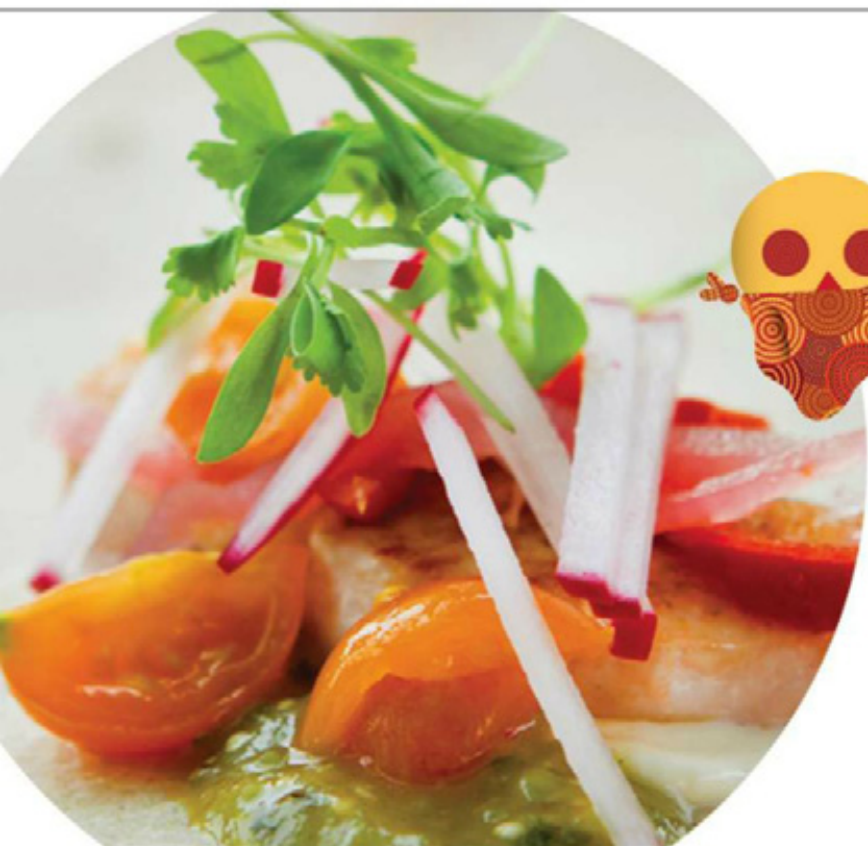
- 1/2 lb. thick-cut bacon (about 4 slices), cut into 1/2" pieces
- 1/4 lb. cured Portuguese chouriço sausage (see page 104), halved lengthwise and cut crosswise 1/4" thick
- 2 large yellow onions, thinly sliced
- 6 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 28-oz. cans whole peeled tomatoes, seeded and crushed by hand
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 6 eggs
- 6 1/2"-thick slices Portuguese pão (see page 104), or rustic country bread, lightly toasted

1 Heat bacon in a 6-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat; cook until fat is rendered and bacon is crisp, about 10 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer bacon to a bowl; set aside. Add sausage to pan; cook until browned, 4-5 minutes, then using a slotted spoon, transfer to bowl with bacon. Drain and discard all but 3 tbsp. fat from pan and add onions. Cook, stirring occasionally, until slightly caramelized, 10-12 minutes. Add garlic and cook until fragrant, 1-2 minutes more. Add tomatoes, salt, pepper, and 2 cups water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook, uncovered, until soup is slightly thickened, about 1 hour. Remove from heat and let cool slightly.

2 Working in batches, purée soup in a blender until smooth; transfer to a 14" high-sided skillet and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Working with 1 egg at a time, crack eggs into a small bowl and carefully slide into soup. Using a spoon, baste eggs with soup, until whites are firm and yolks are just set, about 5 minutes. Divide bread slices between serving bowls and using a slotted spoon, place eggs over bread; ladle soup over the top. Garnish with reserved bacon and sausage.

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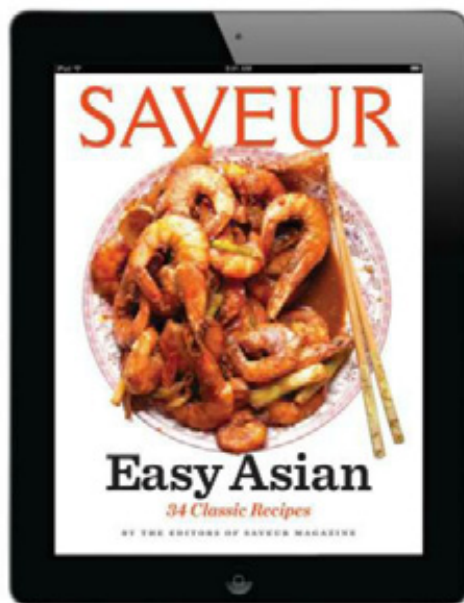
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IN THE SAVEUR KITCHEN

Discoveries and Techniques from Our Favorite Room in the House

Cool Beans

Chickpeas, native to southwest Asia, are a kitchen staple across the globe from the Middle East to Mexico. The legumes, also known as garbanzo beans, grow in small, bright green pods ready to blanch or sauté. Though you'll occasionally find fresh chickpeas at specialty markets, the sweet, nutty bean is usually sold in the U.S. dried or precooked and canned. I love the clean flavor and creamy texture of most dried beans once they're soaked and simmered, but when it comes to chickpeas, I prefer to work with canned varieties. Dried chickpeas can take hours to cook and soften in boiling water, while canned chickpeas are cooked under pressure at extremely high heat, so each little bean is plump, thoroughly tender, and ready to use when you open the tin. Most brands pack their cooked beans in a lightly salted water solution. It's edible, but I prefer to drain the beans and rinse off the brine before I toss a handful into tuna salad or purée them with garlic, lemon juice, olive oil, and tahini for a quick homemade hummus. Chickpeas are slightly richer in oil than most legumes, so they can add delicious body to bubbling stews like Portuguese *cozido de grão* (chickpea stew with lamb, pork, and veal; see page 94 for recipe). They also contribute heartiness and protein to vegetarian dishes such as three-bean chili. One of my favorite things to do, though, is coat the beans in olive oil and roast them in the oven until crisp. Dusted with smoked paprika and seasoned with a touch of salt, they're a quick and elegant snack.

—Kellie Evans



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Simply Red

We fell for *massa de pimentão*, a versatile Portuguese pantry staple, while testing recipes for "The Food I Dream Of" (page 80). The beautiful red bell pepper paste lends a vibrant color and flavor to rustic dishes, seasoning the meat in *entrecosto no forno* (braised spareribs and potatoes; see page 96 for recipe), and brightening the braising liquid in *porco à Alentejana* (braised pork and clams; see page 96 for recipe). Though supermarkets in the Portuguese province of Alentejo sell bottled versions of the popular condiment, serious home cooks still prepare it from scratch. The process is long (the salted peppers are aged for up to two weeks to concentrate their flavors), but it is rewarding. In the SAVEUR test kitchen, we prepared Alentejo dishes with both a store-bought paste and a homemade one. In our recipe, the peppers take



several days to cure, but the resulting paste is bright and intense. To make it, stem and seed 6 large red bell peppers and cut them into 1" strips. Line a colander with several layers of cheesecloth and cover with $\frac{1}{2}$ " of kosher salt. Press 1 layer of pepper strips into the salt and cover with another $\frac{1}{2}$ " of salt. Continue layering the peppers with salt until all the strips are covered. Put a weight such as a cast-iron skillet directly on top, then place the colander over a large bowl. Refrigerate for five days. On the sixth day, remove the pepper strips and brush off all the salt (do not rinse). Purée in a food processor until smooth, then transfer to an airtight container and refrigerate until ready to use. Makes $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups of *massa de pimentão*. The paste is well-seasoned, so be judicious when adding salt to dishes that include it.
—Judy Haubert



Good as Gold

I love sprinkling chewy toasted coconut on vanilla ice cream, layer cakes, and especially pies like the coconut lime custard version we made this month (see "Miss American Pie," page 66). In the test kitchen, we usually toast trays of coconut in the oven, as shown, but a few years ago I started using the microwave to cook shreds at home: It turned out to be the ideal kitchen appliance for the simple technique. Compared with an oven's radiant heat which works from the outside in, microwaves directly agitate the water molecules deep inside the coconut, heating them with speed and efficiency. The delicate shreds are toasted in a flash, so to avoid burning, spread them in a thin layer on a plate and zap in short 20-second bursts. Between each burst, stir and redistribute the coconut to ward against microwave hotspots. In just a minute or two, depending on the strength of your microwave and the amount of coconut you're toasting, the shreds will be crisp and evenly golden, filling your kitchen with an incomparable aroma. —Kellie Evans

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PRIME ROASTERS

We consider our test kitchen to be pretty well-equipped. But as we started preparing Thanksgiving turkeys for our November issue, we were eager to add some new hardware to our collection—namely some good roasting pans. We researched pans in a range of materials and styles, and considered those with and without racks. Our requirements were simple: An ideal Thanksgiving roaster should easily fit an 18-pound bird and never buckle under its weight. The pan should conduct heat evenly, so it doesn't warp in 425-degree roasting temperatures, or worse, burn those caramelized drippings that enrich a stock. After weeks of turkey testing, we've put together a short list of our favorite roasting pans. —Judy Haubert

1 The All-Clad stainless-steel roaster quickly became the workhorse of the SAVEUR kitchen. The nonreactive stainless steel cleans easily with a quick soak and can even go in the dishwasher. It has handles that stick straight up, not out, ensuring an easy fit in most ovens and a sure grip. The separate angled rack can cradle medium or large birds, and its nonstick frame repels the clingiest of roasted-on tidbits. (2 1/2" x 13 1/4" x 16 1/4"; \$200 at Williams-

Sonoma; williams-sonoma.com; 877/812-6235)

2 The turkey moves elegantly from the oven to the dining table in this handsome copper-clad roaster from France's Mauviel line. It's pricey, but it's also worth the investment—the conductive copper pan with a stainless steel-lined interior offers even heat distribution. For a truly eye-popping centerpiece, we skip the rack and roast and serve the turkey directly atop a layer of aromatic vegetables. (15 1/4" x 12" x 3 1/4"; \$500 at Williams-Sonoma; williams-sonoma.com; 877/812-6235)

3 Chicago Metallic's affordable heavyweight aluminum pan and rack are coated in a nonstick film, making them easy to clean. The rack is flat and fits snugly in the pan, so it can easily accommodate roasted vegetables or baked potatoes, and it doubles as a cooling rack. Precise edges give this roaster the look of an oversize baking pan, and when turkey's not on the menu, the pan can easily be used without the rack to make a large sheet cake or a batch of brownies. (3" x 12" x 17"; \$50 at Sur La Table; surlatable.com; 800/234-0852)

4 Greenpan's environmentally friendly roaster features

a matte ceramic coating and recycled aluminum body with stainless-steel handles and a removable V-rack. The pan is lightweight compared with cast-iron roasters but sturdy enough to trust with your Thanksgiving bird. (18" x 10 1/2" x 3"; \$90 from West Elm Market; westelm.com; 888/922-4119)

5 Calphalon's roaster is a reasonably priced, widely available choice. The pan's construction—a nonstick coating over anodized aluminum—is designed for convenience and easy cleanup. The quick-heating aluminum is ideal for searing meat and aromatics, while the finish discourages foods from charring and sticking. A baster and turning fork are included for an all-in-one turkey roasting package. (17 1/2" x 13 1/4" x 5 1/4"; \$100 from Williams-Sonoma; williams-sonoma.com; 877/812-6235)

6 Customize your roaster in one of seven hues from Le Creuset's signature line. The two-tone enameled finish hides a heavy-duty cast-iron core for even, dependable heat distribution, while the ceramic finish is table-worthy and cleans up easily with nonabrasive cleansers. (3 1/4" x 11 1/4" x 17 1/4"; 7-qt. \$250 from Williams-Sonoma; williams-sonoma.com; 877/812-6235)

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NUT CASE

Though the songs that play this time of year wax nostalgic about chestnuts roasting over open fires, the technique doesn't translate well to most home kitchens. Thankfully, chestnuts are easy to roast in the oven. My preferred method is to score and cook the raw nuts with a little water: The moisture makes it easy to slip off their stubborn inner skins when you're prepping them for holiday dishes such as roasted onion and chestnut compote (see page 64 for recipe). —Judy Haubert



1 Choose smooth, unblemished nuts with glossy, dark brown shells (discard nuts with soft spots, discolorations, cracks, or pinholes). Grip a chestnut firmly with a kitchen towel, flat side up, and use a sharp knife to score an "X" through the outer shell.



2 Heat the oven to 425 degrees. Line a baking sheet with foil, allowing several inches to hang over the edge. Place chestnuts in a single layer on the tray, scored side up; gather the edges of the foil around the chestnuts, creating a pouch with several inches open at the top. Pour $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water into the pouch.



3 Roast until the shells begin to curl back and the chestnut meat is tender when pierced with a knife, about 30 minutes. Let chestnuts cool slightly, then peel away the hard shells and slip the inner skins off the meat.



4 The nuts are easier to peel while they're still warm, so take them from the foil one at a time, returning the chestnuts to the oven to reheat if they cool down too much.



Life of Pie

I love to see a fridge brimming with leftovers the day after Thanksgiving. Sure, the crisp turkey skin is usually gone, but those comforting holiday flavors are big and true, just waiting to star on the plate again. Overstuffed sandwiches or hearty soups are beloved go-tos, but when testing recipes for this month's Thanksgiving and pie stories (see "State of Grace," page 52, and "Miss American Pie," page 66), I came up with a new way to approach my leftovers: a rich, flaky-crusted turkey pot pie. Acting spontaneously with what was in the test kitchen fridge, I carefully paired my pie fillings to balance flavors and play with textures. A foundation of earthy celery-root stuffing perked up under a layer of bright green beans and sharp, pickled shallots; a dollop of chunky chestnut onion compote complemented the firm sliced turkey; then came a few dabs of tart cranberry relish, which cut through the spoonfuls of sweet tomato pudding. To provide some moisture and tie all the flavors together, I added giblet gravy. No matter what leftovers you use to build your pie, be sure to begin with a blind-baked crust (see "Eight Great Pie Tips," page 76) to avoid a soggy bottom or an overcooked filling. Crown everything with a generous layer of leftover mashed potatoes dotted with butter or a second layer of pastry. Bake in a 375-degree oven until golden brown and bubbly for a glorious one-dish meal. —Kellie Evans

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THE PANTRY

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BY KELLIE EVANS

Fare

To make authentic Colombian arepas (see page 16), order **harina P.A.N** from Amazon (\$15 for three 2-lb. bags; amazon.com). Order a copy of **Coi: Stories and Recipes** (Phaidon, 2013) by San Francisco chef Daniel Patterson from Amazon (\$34; amazon.com). Make the Albanian baked lamb and rice with yogurt recipe (see page 22) using **Lucini premium select extra virgin olive oil**, order from lucini.com (\$11 for a 250-ml. bottle; 800/509-8491). Explore the diverse ethnic cuisines of Lonsdale Street in Dandenong, Australia: Visit **Al Lebanese Bakery**, 203 Lonsdale Street (61/3 9794 9500; allebanesebakery.com.au); **Dandenong Market**, on the corner of Clow and Clelland Streets (61/9701-3850; dandenongmarket.com.au); **Maiwand Supermarket**, 262 Thomas Street (61/3-9791-9990); **Marmara Halal Meats**, 17 Clelland Street (61/3-9708-5455); **Sahar Takeaway**, 252-254 Thomas Street (61/3-9793-8076); and **Afghan Salang Restaurant**, 343 Lonsdale Street (61/3-8774-6778). Enjoy a bottle of 21-year **Old Pulteney** single malt scotch whisky, available at Astor Wines and Spirits (\$140 for a 750-ml. bottle; 212/674-7500; astorwines.com). For **spaghetti Napolitan** and other **yoshoku classics**, visit Yoshikami, Taito-ku, Asakusa 1-41-4, Tokyo, Japan (03-3841-1802; yoshikami.co.jp). When traveling through the Atlanta or Miami international airports, taste chef Lorena Garcia's cooking at **Lorena Garcia Tapas** in the F concourse of Atlanta's international terminal) and **Lorena Garcia Cocina** at the Miami airport D concourse near gate 57. Order her **Lorena Bella Kitchen Collection** cookware from HSN.com. Cook with our favorite Native American ingredients: Purchase **cholla cactus buds** (\$9 for a 4-oz. bag), **tepary beans** (\$3 for a 1-lb. bag), and **saguaro cactus syrup** directly from the Tohono O'odham Community Action's Desert Rain Gallery (520/383-4966; tohaonline.org); for pricing and order information for **cactus syrup**, e-mail windy@tohaonline.org; **White Earth Land Recovery Project's wild rice** is available from Native Harvest (\$9 for an 8-oz. bag; 218/375-4602; nativeharvest.com), **parched corn** (\$10 for an 8-oz. bag) and **roasted blue cornmeal** (\$11 for a 12-oz. bag), available from Santa Ana Pueblo Cooking Post (888/867-5198; cookingpost.com).

Ingredient

When preparing pecan recipes (see pages 38-40), order pecans varieties like the Desirable, Elliott, Schley, and Stuart from our favorite farms: **Ellis Bros. Pecans** (800/635-0616; werenuts.com); **Pearson Farm** (888/423-7374; pearsonfarm.com); and **South Georgia Pecan Co.** (229/244-1321; georgiapecan.com).

State of Grace

Purchase **citric acid** to prepare the fall salad with roasted butternut squash, kale chips and pomegranate seeds recipe (see page 61), available from Bulk Apothecary (\$5 for a 1-lb. container; 888/968-7220; bulkapothecary.com). To make the pear and ginger pie with streusel topping (page 62), use **Kraft minute tapioca** available from Amazon (\$19 for six 8-oz. boxes; amazon.com). To prepare the roasted onion and chestnut compote recipe (see page 63), order **fresh chestnuts**, available from **Nuts.com** (\$9 for a 1-lb. bag; 800/558-6867) and peel them at home (see "Nut Case," page 102), or use **jarred whole chestnuts**, available from Roland (\$11 for an 8-oz. jar; 888/274-2380; rolandfood.com).

Miss American Pie

When making the pie recipes (see pages 74-78), try our favorite thickeners: Purchase **King Arthur all-purpose flour** online at kingarthurfour.com (\$5 for a 5-lb. bag; 800/827-6836); order **Argo cornstarch** from soap.com (\$2 for a 16-oz. canister; 800/762-7123); use **Bob's Red Mill potato starch**, available from bobsredmill.com (\$4 for a 1.5-lb. bag; 800/349-2173); buy **Knox unflavored gelatin** at Whole Foods Markets across the country (\$3 for an 8-oz. box; visit wholefoods.com for a list of locations); and **Let's Do Organic tapioca starch**, available at Edward & Sons (\$3 for a 6-oz. box; 805/684-8500; edwardandsons.com). Pie making is easy with our picks for the best tools: Purchase **Mrs. Anderson's pie crust shield** from Bed Bath and Beyond (\$5; visit bedbathandbeyond.com for a list of locations); order a **Oxo dough blender with blades** (\$12; 800/545-4411; oxo.com); **J.K. Adams plain dowel rolling pin** (\$16 for a 19" x 2" pin; 800/451-6118; jkadams.com); use a **bench scraper**, available from NY Cake and Bake (\$7; 212/675-2253; nycake.com); purchase **Fox Run's ceramic pie weights** online at Kitchen and Company (\$5 for a 3/4 lb. jar; 800/458-2616; kitchenandcompany.com); and a **Pyrex 9" glass pie plate**, available from World Kitchen (\$4; 800/999-3436; shopworldkitchen.com). To prepare the cranberry chifon pie (see page 78) use **Leopold Bros cranberry liqueur**, available from Total Beverage (\$33 for a 750-ml. bottle; 303/280-3800; totalbeverage.net).

The Food I Dream Of

Order loaves of **Portuguese pão bread** from Nantucket Bake Shop (\$4 for one loaf; 508/228-2797; nantucketbakeshop.com) to eat alongside dishes from our Portugal feature and to make the tomato and chickpea soups (recipes begin on page 94). If you would rather not make your own massa de pimentão at home (see "Simply Red" on page 100), you can use **Incompil massa de pimentão** (\$4 for a 13-oz. jar; 508/996-1222; amaralsmarket.com) to make the braised pork and clams and the braised spareribs and potatoes recipes (see page 96). To prepare the chickpea stew recipe (see page 94), buy **Goulart's chouriço**, available from buyportuguesefood.com (\$8 a pound; 562/809-7021).

In the Saveur Kitchen

Purchase our favorite brands of canned chickpeas: Buy **Goya** plain, low sodium and organic beans (\$10 for a 15.5 oz. can; amazon.com); order **Wild Harvest Organic** beans from Fresh Direct (\$2 for a 15-oz. can; call 212/796-8002 for delivery availability); buy **Pastene** chickpeas from Pastene (\$1 for a 14-oz. can; 781/830-8200; pastene.com); order **Libby's Organic** canned beans from Seneca Food's online store (\$13 for twelve 15-oz. cans; senecafoods.com); purchase **Rienzi** bean (\$33 for twenty-four 15-oz. cans; 781/834-6560; buytheCase.net); purchase **Westbrae Natural Organic** (\$3 for a 25-oz. can; vitacost.com) and **Eden Organic** beans (\$7 for a pack of four 15-oz. cans; vitacost.com); buy **Bioitalia** chickpeas (\$21 for twelve 14-oz. cans; 630/343-0240; bioitalia.com); purchase **Whole Foods 365** brand beans from Whole Foods Markets across the country (\$1 for a 15-oz. can; visit wholefoods.com for a list of locations); buy **Bush's Best** and **Hanover** beans at your local Walmart (both \$1 for a 16-oz. can; visit walmart.com for a list of locations); order **Progreso** chickpeas from Amazon (\$31 for twenty-four 19-oz. cans; amazon.com); in the New York area, buy **Super A** chickpeas at Associated supermarkets (\$1 for a 15-oz. can; visit associatedsupermarkets.com for a list of locations); and buy **Cento** canned beans, (\$1 for 19-oz. can; fineproductsinternational.com). When choosing a roasting pan for your turkey this Thanksgiving, consider using one of our favorite models: Purchase an **All-Clad stainless-steel roaster** or **Mauviel M365 copper roaster** from Williams-Sonoma (\$200/\$500; 877/812-6235; williams-sonoma.com); buy a **Chicago Metallic roasting pan**, from Sur La Table (\$50; 800/243-0852; surlatable.com); visit West Elm for a **Greenpan nonstick roaster** (\$90; 888/922-4119; westelm.com); purchase a **Le Creuset 7-qt. roaster** from Amazon (\$250; amazon.com); or pick up a **Calphalon contemporary non-stick roaster** from Bed Bath and Beyond (\$100; visit bedbathandbeyond.com for locations).



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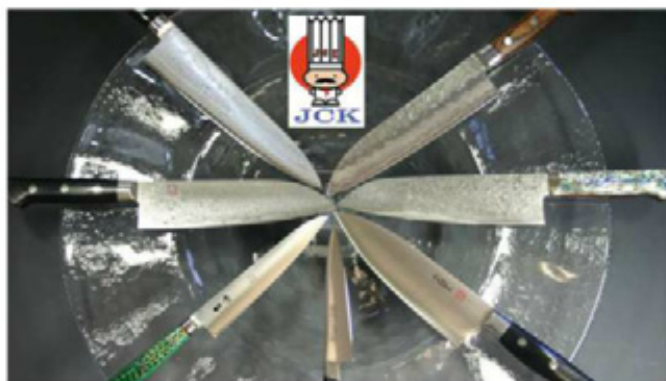


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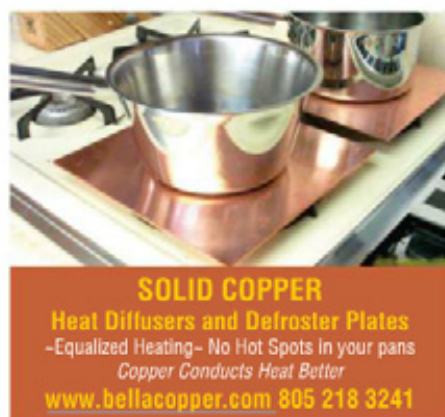
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